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THE

MAID OF FLORENCE;

OR,

NICCOLÒ DE' LAPI.

BY

THE MARQUIS MASSIMO D'AZEGLIO,
EX-PRIME-MINISTER OF SARDINIA.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN BY
W. FELGATE, M.A.

> Videbis, fili mi, quam parva sapientia regitur mundus.
> OXENSTIERN.
> Sunt lacrymæ rerum; et mentem mortalia tangunt.
> VIRGIL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.
VOL. I.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
1853.

LONDON:
R. CLAY, PRINTER, BREAD STREET HILL.

TO THE ENGLISH TRANSLATOR.

SIR,

BEING anxious that your Translation should be known to have my entire approval, and therefore be the only one authorized by me, I permit you to specify this fact in such way as you may think most advisable to protect the interests of the English publisher.

As the International Copyright Act between England and France grants to French authors the right to select their own translators; so I desire that you may be considered as the Translator especially approved by me, and as rendering my Work most satisfactorily. In fact, that your Translation may, for the author's sake, possess the value of copyright, as regards "Niccolò de' Lapi."

MASSIMO D'AZEGLIO.

5, BERKELEY SQUARE,
May 27, 1853.

⁂ In affixing the above letter to this Translation of the "Maid of Florence," I am glad to avail myself of the opportunity thus presented to me, of acknowledging the courtesy and kindness which I experienced from its illustrious and distinguished Author, with reference to my humble labours in connexion with his elegant and talented work.

W. F.

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TO THOMAS ROE, ESQ.

Of Temple Chambers.

My dear Sir,

In dedicating to you the Translation of the following beautiful Tale, allow me to say that I am actuated by the same motives that many others have confessed to, under similar circumstances; namely, to tell the world that I enjoy the honour and happiness of your acquaintance and friendship. It is true that during the whole of your life, you have rather courted obscurity than otherwise, and have pursued undeviatingly—by a rational choice, as it seems to me,—the sequestered path of a quiet and tranquil existence; but none can, on that account, consider the mild and steady virtues that distinguish you, as less excellent, because the subject of them has had no ambition to be conspicuous. If I had to describe your character to those who do *not* know you, in the fewest possible words, I should for that purpose borrow the language of the great poet of antiquity:—"*Justissimus unus et servantissimus æqui;*"—whilst those who *do*, will, I feel persuaded, at once recognise the correctness of the portrait.

There is also an additional motive that influences me in this dedication, which is, to take this opportunity of recording my grateful sense of the numerous kindnesses I have received from you. It is related of one of the Abbé Sicard's deaf and dumb pupils, that when requested to give his definition of gratitude, he wrote down that it was "The memory of the heart." And be assured, Sir, that whatever else fades from my recollection, this species of memory will ever be cherished by me towards *you;* and to acknowledge how much I am indebted to your goodness will ever be my chief pride and highest pleasure; especially as your name will always be associated in my mind with whatever is pure and lofty in honour, and that is excellent in the charity that thinketh no evil, with that freedom from prejudice, and general fairness, not only in your actions, but in your sentiments, that is the last result of all that is truly great and noble in human nature.

Believe me to remain ever, my dear Sir, your affectionate and attached friend and relative,

WILLIAM FELGATE.

CRIPPLEGATE, *May* 2, 1853.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

In inviting the attention of the English reader to the accompanying tale, we feel that our best apology for so doing, will be found in the tale itself. The distinguished author of it is equally celebrated as artist, statesman, soldier, and romancist: how far he has succeeded in this latter capacity, we may fairly leave it to the reader to decide. But we cannot help observing that, independent of its merits, as a work of imagination, it is everywhere interspersed with the finest reflections,—religious, moral, political, and philosophical,—which are alike creditable to the heart and understanding of its illustrious author; and which cannot fail to render it interesting to every class of readers:—to the educated for its genius, to the uneducated for the interest of the tale itself; which is of such a nature, that the best translation could not improve it, nor the worst very greatly impair it. The accomplished author in his concluding paragraph, appeals to the reader for his justification, in adopting the famous words of the celebrated Swedish Chancellor for his motto. It is with equal confidence that we too anticipate, that the reader will acquiesce in the appropriateness of the words, which we have ventured to append as an additional one:—

" *Sunt lacrymæ rerum,*" *&c.*[*]

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[*] "At others' woes the feeling heart will melt;
"Another's misery as our own is felt."

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

This story that I present to the public, not without some degree of trepidation, was begun in 1833; and has been laid aside a hundred times, for reasons caused by indisposition both of mind and body. If it preserves the traces of these interruptions; if, owing to my deficiencies, the execution of my task falls so much below the subject of it, I could not for that reason, without ingratitude, entertain a doubt of the favour and indulgence at least of Italians. I ought to recollect that merely from a regard to the subject, they favourably received a former attempt of mine. And this second undertaking, therefore, which also turns on an event no less honourable to the Italian name, may also expect that equal indulgence will be extended to one, whose aim, so long as life and strength remain, is to have no thought, no feeling that is not dedicated to his country.

Though I have undertaken to treat of a period, glorious alike and terrible for the city of Florence, in which the republic defended itself, unaided, against the arms of Clement VII. and Charles V., still my design has not been to draw a complete picture of the siege of 1529—1530; and the very title of this tale may suffice to show, that I have proposed to myself to describe, not so much the transactions themselves, as the feelings and passions which, at that time, agitated the Florentine people.

The entire account of the siege, in order and detail, Varchi has given us better than any other writer. A living witness, and an actor in the events he narrates, and influenced by the passions of the time, who could hope to surpass him? Who would venture to do his work over again?

To the historians then we must go for the history: to Varchi for the account of the siege; for in spite of his long and intricate sentences, spite of the obscurity and confusion, that are occasionally to be found in their construction, yet his account will ever be the one that will transport the reader to the sixteenth century with the most perfect success; that will transfuse into the mind of the present generation the ideas, the sentiments, and, in a word, the entire life of the fifteenth.

But if Varchi has told his story well, has he therefore told all? all that one would wish to know with reference to those men of a past age, who in their love, their hatred, their faith, their self-sacrifice, and even in their crimes, displayed an iron nature, far removed from modern insipidity and softness.

What the reply of my reader may be, I know not. My own is in the negative. For I am indeed far from knowing all I should wish, when I read of the glorious achievements of those brave citizens, of their battles, tumults, and intrigues. And when I survey them, on the public arena, as magistrates, as soldiers, as the chiefs of parties, I regard with admiration their constancy, their valour, their virtue, their intrepidity; I am amazed to think that human nature has produced beings of such vast capacity; but I ask in vain of the historian what sort of men they were as fathers, husbands, sons, and brothers; what sort of men they were, I say, when after a hard-fought field, they returned at evening to their homes; and when, having laid aside their armour, they sought a respite to their cares and to the toils that occupied them abroad, and renewed, in the intimacies and intercourse of their families, the strength to encounter new perils and new fatigues.

Finding history mute and incapable of answering my questions, I turned to the chronicles, the archives, and the annual registers of the time, to the traditions of the people, to their monuments. I interrogated the towers and the walls of Florence, and the bastions of San Miniato, where the creeping ivy covers alike the republican monuments carved by the chisel of Michelangelo, and the Medicean emblem of the six balls; just as the same tomb received, at one and the same time, the ashes of Polynices and Eteocles. I interrogated the Palazzo Vecchio, that ancient and unchanged witness of so many triumphs and so many defeats, which saw so many destinies rise and fall; which, from the summit of its Guelphic battlements, saw the Duke of Athens overthrown, the Ciompi's successful insurrection, the martyrdom of the friar Savonarola, the dead body of Jacob Pazzi dragged along the ground, and the Medicean hydra three times trampled in the dust, and three times rise again victorious, which survived the republic, and saw it avenged in the foul and bloody retribution, that fell on the race of Cosimo, ignobly exterminated two hundred years after: that edifice that still erects its ancient walls, that sustains the lofty tower of Arnolfo, and is destined perhaps to see as many centuries in the future, as it has already in the past.

I visited the palace of the Bargello, where in former times the priors of the republic had their first residence, their first council-rooms. I saw the staircase of the court-yard, all of marble with a rude covering over it, like the steps of a cottage ;* those massive stone slabs which formed its pavement, and in the centre of which, instead of fountain or statue to ornament it, had so often been seen the axe and the block, crimsoned with the blood of so many citizens, who there met their end, sometimes justly and sometimes unjustly, but at all times bravely and manfully ; those stones, that had resounded beneath the blows which deprived of life Boscoli, Capponi, Bernardo del Nero, Francesco Carduccio, the last gonfalonier but one of the republic, and so many others, who all lost their heads, staked in the tremendous game, which lasted more than a century, between the house of the Medici and the people of Florence.

I surveyed the antique dwellings of the citizens, those palaces, or rather domestic fortresses of stone, with their dark and frowning battlements, all resembling pretty nearly the palace Ferroni at the bridge of the Santa Trinita. I surveyed the courtyards, the staircases ; I entered everywhere, endeavouring to figure to myself the appearance, the conversation, the manners of their ancient inhabitants; just as sometimes when we see an ancient rusty helmet, and raising the vizor, fancy tries to picture the bold and manly countenance that once filled the vacant space.

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* These were the times of greatness and simplicity combined. The merchants who lent the king of England twenty million florins of gold, had scarcely a silver vessel on their table ; and their wives used to go to market in the morning, attended by their servant-maid, to make their purchases.

With fancy, then, (and what other guide could I take?) I sought with curious eye everywhere and by all means, to catch a glimpse of the ancient people of Florence; that people of such energy, of such vitality, that after three centuries of commotions, of wars, of civil strife, of outbreaks, and of proscriptions, yet found itself, in 1530, sufficiently powerful to resist, single-handed, the might of Charles V., and fell after a long struggle, rather betrayed than vanquished; a people that flourished when it seemed to carry in its bosom the seeds of its own destruction, that degenerated, and lost every generous sentiment, every particle of spirit, when it had passed through a long and uninterrupted state of peace, under the dominion of the Medici. Perhaps, because the first principle of the ancient state was to inflame their patriotism; whilst that of the Medicean government was to trample it down and extinguish it.

But the traces imprinted on the soil of Florence by its ancient inhabitants, modern civilization has almost entirely obliterated. The foreigners, too, who every year come to enjoy Italy, and to vilify it, have obliterated them also.

Saddened and thoughtful at the terrible judgment which weighs down my country, I hoped at least to find the ancient traces of its people in some neglected and forgotten spot, where the customs, the language, and the stream of tradition had remained pure and undisturbed by the track of strangers. I scoured the country, I ascended the mountains of Pistoia, and refreshed my heart and gladdened my ears by hearing the poor countrymen and the shepherds address me in the ancient Florentine, by listening to whatever they could tell me of Castruccio, of Francesco Ferruccio, and which they, certainly, had not gathered from books or histories, but, handed down from age to age, had learnt, that the first was a brave man, and that the second fell upon their mountains for the salvation of Florence. I bless those hours that I passed among them, seated at some lowly hearth, listening to the rude and yet most spirited recitals of those simple people, who knew much indeed of those ancient and glorious ages, but nothing of the present, as if an instinctive judgment informed them how little it possesses that is worth knowing. In these conversations I succeeded in forgetting the present, and seemed, as I may say, to live in the past; so as to see before me, in living reality, those men who were known to me only by having seen them delineated by historians, dramatists, and romancers.

"I have found them, then!" I exclaimed, in a transport of delight; "I have found the models I purpose to describe!" And I applied myself to study them, to delineate, as far as it was possible, first from the life, and then by the aid of analogy and of fancy, the domestic life, the passions and the feelings of the era which I had chosen, in order to represent the actors of my narrative.

As the fruit of my labours, drawn partly from reality, and partly from imagination, I lay the following work before my reader: in which, imitating the architect, who in order to show the interior of an edifice, furnishes a section of his design, I have aimed at representing, on a similar plan, the home of a Florentine citizen during the siege.

I have used my utmost endeavours to do well what I have done. And if I have failed, let my reader reflect, that even to do it ill requires care and pains, and is attended with no little difficulty.

THE
MAID OF FLORENCE;
OR,
NICCOLÒ DE' LAPI.

CHAPTER I.

THE events which we are about to relate happened at the period when Florence was besieged by the army of Charles V., who, in order to give effect to the treaty of Barcelona concluded with Clement VII., was desirous of compelling the Florentines to submit to the dominion of the Medici. The people of Florence, on their part, refused to receive them, even in the capacity of private citizens, and bravely defended themselves, being animated thereto by the recollection that those very Medici had been so easily driven out in 1527; as well as rendered courageous by the prophecies of the friar, Jerome Savonarola, and by their ambition of remaining a free state, and no less so by the arms and fortifications which had been prepared for their defence by the care of the party called the Piagnoni, who were of opinion that the Emperor and the Pope were not likely to be satisfied merely with the return of the Medici to their country, with the other expelled Palleschi, and their being placed on the footing of private citizens, but, under so modest a demand, were really designing to make them its masters.

Our story opens on a morning at the latter end of October, 1529; the dawn seemed to be struggling more than usual to make its appearance, with difficulty penetrating the thick clouds that hung over the city. A misty rain, dull and cold, was falling, which might almost be called snow; and in the streets, save a soldier or two, and the companies of the night-watch, who were returning to the Palace benumbed with cold, and closely wrapped in their cloaks, with the lappets of the hood concealing their face, not a living soul was to be seen.

The doors and windows were all closed, and the shutters barred, which showed that the greater part of the citizens were still buried in sleep. They were opening the churches, indeed, but no one was to be seen there, except the servants who were occupied in cleaning them, and a sacristan or two preparing the altars.

In St. Mark's alone, the church of the Dominicans, the bells which had been sounding a funeral knell ever since an hour before the dawn had already drawn together a small number of the faithful. The interior of this church was not, at that time, adorned with the pillars of the composite order, and the altars which John Bologna afterwards erected there; but preserved the style of severe simplicity, such as it had when built by Cosimo the Elder.

Before the high altar, between four huge iron candelabra, a bier rested on the ground, on which was extended the corpse of a young man, evidently not more than five-and-twenty. In his hands, which were joined together on his breast, was placed a crucifix; and the ground, as well as the bier, was strewn, according to the Florentine custom, with the leaves and flowers of the orange-tree. On the pillow, which supported his head, were two consecrated candles burning, which the worshippers used in paying the last rites of affection and respect to the dead.*

Although he was dressed in the habit of St. Dominic, yet it might easily be conjectured that it had been put on him solely from a pious motive, after his decease, and not that he had worn it during life; and what rendered this probable was, that there were deposited at the feet of the corpse a sword and a shield, which latter bore a scarlet lily on a white ground, the device of the Florentine Commonwealth.

As the mass had not yet commenced, one only of the four candelabra was burning. Its reddish light, shedding its rays on a group of persons who had been the first to arrive, and were praying on their knees ranged around the bier, illuminated the nearest figures (as Rembrandt often does) with diffused and quivering beams of light, which, falling more and more feeble on the various objects, in proportion to their distance, was at last swallowed up in total darkness at the extreme end of the church. It was only up above that the gloom was somewhat relieved by the faint and attenuated rays of light that streamed downward from the windows of the roof, which now began to be visible by the pale and azure tint that, with the advancing day, was reflected on the panes of glass.

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* By making the sign of the cross with the wax from the tapers, called "blessing the dead."—Trans.

Not a minute passed but people came in—one, two, and three at a time—who, by their heavy steps, the clanking of the rowels of their spurs, and by the dark gleaming of their helmets and habergeons, were evidently soldiers. They advanced forward, and taking their stand behind those who were already in the church, they grounded the butt-end of their spear or ponderous arquebuss (for all had one or other with them), and stood still, with mournful countenance, and in an attitude of profound reverence.

In a short time there appeared, attended by a score of men well armed, the Standard of the Golden Lion, of the quarter of St. John. It was a banner, such as the infantry use at the present day, with a golden lion painted on a white ground. The bearer of it stopped in the middle of the church, and remained there, surrounded by his men. The crowd gradually increased, clustering around the bier, and the group who stood by it; the latter, it was plain, was composed of the nearest relatives of the deceased.

At about two paces from the feet of the corpse, stood an old man far advanced in years. He had on the lucco, the dress usually worn by the citizens of the Florentine republic, especially by the better sort of persons; it was a garment of black serge lined with fur, slit down in front, with side-openings for the arms, and plaited in the upper part, so as to form a ruff round the neck, where it was fastened by a clasp. On his head was the cappuccio, which consisted of a padded circlet covered with cloth, and was called the mazzochio; one portion of this fell as a pendant over the left shoulder, and was called the foggia; another, the becchetto, which was a strip of the same cloth, was so long as to reach the ground, but being gathered up, was fixed on the right shoulder, or else, as was often the case, folded round the neck.*

The general appearance of this old man, who was broad-shouldered and tall, was vigorous and healthy. There still remained on his cheeks that fresh colour, which results from a good constitution, that had never been impaired by dissipation. In his beard, which was long and thick, and in the few hairs that stole out from beneath his cappuccio, there was not one, that was not of snowy whiteness. His eyebrows alone still partially preserved their original dark colour; and a frequent contraction of the muscles, which brought them together, contributed to give to his dark eyes an exceedingly stern expression.

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* Those readers who may wish for a detailed account of the manners and customs of the Florentines alluded to in this story, their civil and political institutions, their dress, &c., will find all that they could desire in the excellent Florentine History by Captain Henry Edward Napier, F.R.S. The reader may consult more particularly vol. iv. book ii. Miscellaneous chapter, and Chapter XII.—Trans.

This old man's name was Niccolo di Ser Cione di Ser Lapo de Lapi; he belonged to the middle class of citizens, and was one of the wardens of the guild of silk-weavers. He could boast of having reached his ninetieth year (for that was his age) without ever sullying his integrity; a firm patriot, and an unswerving friend of the popular cause; for the sake of which, he had often hazarded both person and property. But to boast of such a course of life, would never have even entered his thoughts; to have done as he had done, was so much a part of his very nature, that, as it appeared to him, he could have acted no otherwise.

Among the most devoted followers of Savonarola, whilst he lived, he bewailed him, when dead, and ever venerated him as a martyr. His whole study was rigidly to observe, in every action and on every occasion of his life, without any regard to the world, the severe precepts of the friar; which we must confess, led him sometimes to convert the mild spirit of the Gospel into a despotic and impracticable law.

Ser Cione, the father of Niccolo, had been involved in the conspiracy, which, headed by Rinaldo Albizzi, succeeded in banishing from Florence, for a year, Cosimo, who was surnamed the Father of his Country; so that, on the return of this latter, he went with many others who were sentenced to expatriation, to finish his life in exile.

Niccolo, born in a town of Puglia, which had been assigned as the place of his father's banishment, was a witness of the sufferings he underwent in his latter years, and of his obscure death, surrounded by all the miseries attendant on his forlorn condition. He had, therefore, conceived with the earliest ideas of his infancy, a fierce hatred against the Medici and the party of the Palleschi. How he reconciled his hatred with the Gospel he professed, no one will be at a loss to comprehend, who is acquainted with the kind of logic adopted by partisans.

After many years, he was enabled to return to Florence. There he had reopened his father's factory, and realized enormous profits; with which he succoured the city in 1494, when, by the descent of Charles VIII. and by the pusillanimity of Piero de Medici, the Florentine state was exposed to the most imminent danger. On that occasion, it was shown by the lower orders, the silk-weavers, and the operatives of all kinds, how devoted they were to him; for, on the night preceding the day, on which Peter Capponi tore up the articles of the treaty in the face of Charles, he had more than six thousand around him.*

This devoted attachment of the populace, springing from the reverence which his virtues inspired, and from their knowing him to be a sincere and steadfast patriot, became stronger and stronger; because they knew he had never made his patriotism a pretext for personal aggrandisement; and when the Medici returned in 1412, the mere dread of public opinion had sufficed to save him from persecution. His reputation alone had been sufficient, at the same time, to preserve him from the flatteries and seductions, with which the party of the Palleschi never ceased to tempt over their opponents; and from 1512 to 1527, the year of the last expulsion of the Medici, though he was looked upon with suspicion, yet he was left unmolested; and by the popular party was looked up to, as the man, on whom more than any other of their leaders, they based their hopes, whenever a favourable opportunity should present itself for reclaiming their liberty.

The friendship, too, which had united him so closely to Savonarola, the scrupulous fidelity with which he observed the friar's precepts, and, above all, the blind confidence he reposed in his prophecies, caused the survival, so to say, in his person, of that species of veneration, among the populace, which they had formerly entertained for the celebrated Dominican. Even the monks of St. Mark's themselves held him in the highest esteem, looked on him as one of themselves, and treated his advice with the same deference that they had formerly manifested for the counsels of Savonarola himself.

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* On the famous occasion when Capponi made the memorable answer, "Sound your trumpets, and our bells shall answer them."—Trans.

Two years before the period of this story, when by the departure of the Cardinal of Cortona, and of Hippolytus and Alexander Medici, Florence had returned to its republican form of government, he had used his influence, in conjunction with Niccolo Capponi and Filippo Strozzi, to save the State, agitated as it then was by so many various and conflicting interests, and the spirit of so many different parties. He had been one of the Seigniory, and of the Ten Commissioners of Liberty and Peace; but more than on his official position, his authority was grounded on the confidence which the multitude reposed in him.

There began already to be rumours of the siege; and Niccolo, confiding in the famous prophecy of Savonarola, "*Florentia flagellabitur, et post flagella renovabitur*," (Florence shall be scourged, and after her chastisement shall be restored,) always sided with the party which refused to make any terms with the Medici; and used his utmost exertions to stir up the people to the defence of their city. At length the army, conducted by Philibert of Chalons, Prince of Orange, appeared before the walls, and pitched their camp on the hills to the south of Florence, the 24th of October, 1529. Niccolo, in the short period that had elapsed since the commencement of the siege, had already attended the obsequies of one of his sons, who had fallen fighting under the walls. He was now assisting at the funeral of a second; with lofty brow, and calm countenance, his mind was entirely absorbed in God, to whom he offered, not only the life of these two sons, whom he regarded as martyrs in their country's cause, but the lives of those who still survived, and his own too, provided it was for the salvation of Florence.

By his wife Flora, who had now been dead some few years, he had had five sons and two daughters. The three surviving sons were standing with him by the bier: two of them had on the habergeon, or corslet, as at that time, it may be said, the young men of Florence never took it off. The name of the youngest was Bindo. He was a handsome lad of fourteen years of age; but by his size you would have thought him eighteen, at least: he had no corslet on, and no arms at his side, as his brothers had. The elegant formation of his limbs, knit together in perfect harmony; the fine olive tint of his complexion; his dark eyes, full of expression, and very bright, possessing the haughty sternness which distinguished his father's, but softened by the gentler grace of youth, gave you the impression that a sword at his side and a cuirass on his breast would have become him well. But more than all, the lofty spirit and fearless bearing which he had manifested from his childhood, rendered him worthy now to bear arms in his country's service. Niccolo saw in his son a second self; Bindo represented his father, no less in the qualities of his mind, than in his external figure. For this reason, though he would neither suffer his partiality to appear, nor even admit its existence, he loved him more tenderly than the rest. This fondness had hitherto prevented him from yielding to the pressing entreaties of Bindo, who was almost dying to join as a soldier. Niccolo often said to him, "A fine soldier, truly, at fourteen! Thou art a child, my dear Bindo! Let those who are older lead the way: thy time will come soon enough." At last, however, in order to pacify him, he had promised, that, in case any of his brothers should be slain, he would permit him to take his place. The time for fulfilling his promise had now arrived; and Niccolo was not the man to retract.

In the morning, before he left home, he could not refrain, in spite of his austere disposition, from lavishing a caress on his son; and taking him with him into his room, had thus addressed him:—

"My dear Bindo, till now thou hast been but a child; but since you aspire henceforth to be a man, be so, in God's name. Thou wilt come with us: it is right thou shouldst know how things are going on around you. Pray God to make you a brave fellow. May He bestow on thee his aid, my son, even as I bestow on thee my blessing."

The old man, his countenance showing symptoms of emotion, and with faltering voice, embraced his son; they then proceeded to St. Mark's. That internal agitation, that rapid bounding of the pulse, which arises from a strong convulsion of feeling, assailed the heart of Bindo when he found himself by the coffin, in which were deposited the remains of poor Baccio, (for that was his brother's name,) whom he had always till now seen so lively and active, whom he had had as the companion of his sports for so many years, but who was now pale and motionless, with death upon his brow; and at Bindo's age, to die, seems a thing so impossible.

He saw in the middle of his forehead a round hole, about the size of a crown-piece, which had been made by a ball from one of those huge arquebusses which were used in 1500. He had till now only heard or talked of deeds of arms, of wounds, and deaths; and these discourses had inflamed his ardour to share in them himself; but now he saw before his eyes, in all their naked reality, their terrible effects; and the difference is no slight one! Two burning tears were ready to fall, and he felt his heart agitated by hitherto unknown emotions. For a moment he was dismayed at the sight that met his eye, and he asked himself:—"Is it possible I should be afraid?"

We entreat the reader not to be hasty in replying in the affirmative to this simple interrogation of Bindo, since he would certainly be mistaken. The feeling he experienced was not fear: it was a mingled sensation of stupor, of sorrow, of a thirst for glory, and of indignation; and it is not to be wondered at if, at his age, he was not in a condition to explain his feelings to himself.

Of the other sons of Niccolo, the elder, a man more than forty, was called Averardo; the second, Vieri. His two daughters were on their knees, at some little distance, in a sitting posture. The name of the elder was Laldomine, or Laodamia; that of the younger, Lisa. In the meantime the sacristan had lighted four candles at the high altar; he approached the bier, having a wand in his hand with a wick fastened to the top, and after he had lit the remaining three of the four tapers that were at the four corners of the bier, finding himself near Niccolo, he whispered to him in an under tone, as he pointed to the corpse:—"He was a true son of the Lapi, Sir Niccolo, every inch of him! Peace to his soul."

"*Amen*," replied the old man; and the friar, with a sigh, proceeded towards the sacristy.

A moment after, the mass commenced. The celebrant priest was father Benedict da Faenza, the superior of the convent, a venerable old man, who evidently felt the weight of years which bowed him down. The laic, who was serving in his rochet, displayed a physiognomy on which it was impossible to look without being so struck with it, as not readily to forget it, as is the case with most of the faces one meets. For this person had such a curious look, and so strange a manner, and something about his whole appearance so incongruous and odd, that once seen, you could not get rid of his image from your thoughts. He appeared to be about fifty, rather tall and slim in his figure, but vigorous and upright as a youth; there was a fearless expression about his eye (and this must be understood literally, for he had but one), and his right cheek was marked by a long scar. In all his motions, and in everything he did, there was an easy, indifferent manner, that was but little in unison with the dress he wore. At the same time, it was impossible to charge him with any want of becoming reverence; nay, he kept his eyes fixed on the ground, his countenance was grave and demure, and he made the responses at the proper time with a clear, distinct voice, without clipping his words, as the clerics too generally do when serving mass. Yet it was easy to see that, at that moment, it was no slight effort for him to attend to the precept of *Age quod agis.*

The artillery planted by the Imperialists at Giramonte was heard firing a few shots; but no notice was taken of it, as it was a daily occurrence; but the discharges were becoming by degrees louder and more frequent, and many of the soldiers who were in the church for the purpose of attending the funeral of their companion-in-arms, began whispering to one another, and turning their eyes involuntarily towards the door; though to little purpose, indeed, since they could not from thence gather any explanation of matters that were taking place so far off. Their remarks were something of this kind:—

"The chimera* is beginning to puff its cheeks betimes, this morning."—"Eh! a *feu-de-joie*, may be, for some ill luck or other that has lighted on us."—"Perish every man of 'em!"—(just then a still louder discharge was heard.) "Hark, hark! that must be Malatesta's arquebuss."†—"Just listen, what a medley!"—"A stormy day this: the morning call without the lute!"—"To-day in the fight, to-morrow under the turf."—"Ah! what's that? &c. &c."

These and similar exclamations, which proceeded from the midst of the group that stood at the end of the church, formed a confused noise, which, united to the vollies of artillery, caused a great distraction to the poor lay-brother. He did not, indeed, venture to turn round; but it was observed that he no longer remained with his attention fixed on his duty, as at first: his ear was on the stretch, and now and then he slyly cast a side glance towards the door.

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* A piece of artillery so called, which the citizens of Siena had sent to the Imperialists' camp, with that generous zeal which the Italians at that time manifested towards one another!

† A very large-sized culverin, cast by Vincenzo Brigucci. It weighed 18,000 lbs. It had an elephant's head on the breach, and the children had given it the name of Malatesta's arquebuss; he being the captain-general of the Florentines.

Niccolo was displeased at hearing such a whispering in the church; and, scarcely turning his head towards the direction from whence it came, he said with a firm and clear, though subdued, tone of voice—

"It seems, my friends, we are in the market-place!"

A dreaded schoolmaster, who, with angry voice, commands silence to some score of children, is not more promptly obeyed than was Niccolo by that knot of people, composed of men who, however, would not have suffered themselves to be so interrupted by anybody else. The silence was at once general and complete, so that the priest, who was repeating that part of the mass which is directed to be said in a low tone, could be heard from one end of the church to the other. But this pause was destined to be of short duration.

Suddenly, at a discharge of artillery more terrific than any that had preceded it, the glass, the lead, and the woodwork of one of the largest windows, broken into a thousand fragments, fell in the church, dashing against and rebounding from the cornices, the walls, and all the pillars and projections with which they came in contact; causing such devastation and raising such clouds of dust, that it seemed as if the roof were tumbling down. Luckily a great part of the ruins fell on an altar, closed in by a balustrade, so that no one was hurt.

It was a custom at that time for the soldiers who were besieging a city, on all occasions, as when they received their pay—when it was the Sovereign's birth-day under whom they served; indeed at all times when an opportunity offered for testifying their joy, to lower the breeches of their guns which were placed to batter the fortifications, about a span, and then to fire them off at random, without taking aim; so that the shots, sweeping over the walls, fell in the midst of the city, where they killed or maimed, God knows how many, which these men made as little account of, as the courteous reader does of holding this book in his hand. And this glorious amusement (according to their ideas) was called gazzarra.

The camp of the Prince of Orange was at this moment engaged in such an ebullition of their good humour, and while performing their gazzarra this morning, one ball struck the church of St. Mark; another wounded, in the square of St. John, one of the best soldiers of Captain Sandrino Monaldi; and in other parts of the city also, much damage was done.

This accident did not greatly disturb either the soldiers, or Niccolo and his sons. The two girls were somewhat alarmed; but when they found it was succeeded by no more, they were soon reassured. The person who showed the greatest symptoms of terror (and in his case, his age and infirmities might well excuse him) was the priest, who was saying mass. The sense of fear, for the time, overcame every other consideration; and to say truth, such a clatter could not but startle, at least, any one who was not expecting it. He shrugged his shoulders together, and bending his head downwards, with his hands raised to protect it, he exclaimed, "Merciful Heaven!" And if the sturdy lay brother had not seized him under the arm, in all probability he would have fallen.

Thus far it was all very well, and the laic had merited the gratitude, rather than otherwise, of his superior. The mischief was, that when in the act of supporting him, such an irresistible inclination to laugh seized on him, at seeing the old man so alarmed at an accident, which he deemed but a trifling affair; that, in spite of his efforts to repress it, he at last burst out into the most sonorous and discordant peal that was ever heard; and from having his hands occupied in holding up the poor priest, who was still trembling like a leaf, he could neither turn his head away, nor place his hand on his mouth, nor restrain himself by means of those checks which are usually effectual in such cases.

CHAPTER II.

Many among the bystanders had noticed the alarm of the monk, who was saying mass. From the respect in which he was held, it gave great offence to most of them, that the lay-brother had been so rude and uncourteous, as to laugh in the way he had done. They thought he must be some low-bred person, who had left the spade for the friar's robe.

In this, however, they were mistaken. And in order that the reader, too, may not think his behaviour so very unaccountable, we will inform him, as briefly as possible, who he was.

The Italians of the present day are tolerably well acquainted with the history of their country; so that if our reader is an Italian, he will doubtless remember a combat that was fought near Barletta, by our countrymen against the French; in which, the latter were defeated. But in the event of this book falling into the hands of a foreigner, we would just beg him to look into Guicciardini, Giovio, or Muratori, under the date of 1503; and he will there find the account of this combat; and among the Italian cavaliers, mention is made of one Tito da Lodi, surnamed Fanfulla, who, as

Giovio specially records, was a brave man, but of a strange and wayward disposition.

This Fanfulla, when Gonsalvo had entirely subjugated the kingdom of Naples, received, as well as the rest of the Company of Prospero Colonna, to which he was attached, his share of the booty; and converted it very speedily into two hundred golden ducats. On the last day of the first month, which he passed in Naples, after having drawn this sum, he was about to part company with his last coin, which found its way into the purse of those, who were more lucky or more skilful than himself at Lansquenet, and went to join the other one hundred and ninety-nine. He had, it is true, a good horse and an excellent suit of armour, to sell or pledge; and he might have tried his fortune once more, but he had sense enough to understand, that that would be much the same, as for a blind beggar to sell his violin, which gains him his subsistence. So he resigned himself to his fate, and took courage; "By this time," he said to himself, "I am pretty well known; so that go where I may, I shall find bed and board."

Prospero had refused to retain him any longer among his followers, for some quarrel or other, that he had had with his comrades, in which, having reason against him, he had helped his cause by an application of blows. But notwithstanding all this, when he found himself reduced to his last shifts, he waited on him at the Gravina Palace, in the square, where stands, at the present day, the fountain of Mount Olivet, without being disturbed by the thought of having to pass into his presence, through an antechamber crowded with his enemies; and when introduced, he said, that he had only come to ask for an attestation, in writing, of his conduct at the Combat of Barletta; and then to beg him, if he would have the goodness, to inform him, in what country, active service might be met with at no great distance.

Prospero, who really was kindly disposed towards him, and knowing him to be such a bold and dare-devil cavalier, as few are, gave him his discharge, speaking highly in his praise; and directed him to the Campania, where he joined the Colonna faction, during the commotions which followed on the death of Alexander VI.; which disturbed the brief pontificate of Pius III.; and the commencement of that of Julius II. He followed this haughty pontiff in his campaign into Romagna; and afterwards, not to render our story too long, he went on changing his masters till 1527; and during all that time, there was not an action of importance, at which he was not present. He lost an eye at the battle of Ravenna, two fingers of the left hand at Marignano, was left for dead on the field of battle at Pavia; and though, after so many buffettings, he was reduced to walk with a limp, felt pain in the parts where he had been wounded, with every change of the weather; although his whiskers, formerly quite black, appeared now becoming grisly; yet, we find him on the morning of the 6th of May, 1527, (and God knows how gladly we should pass the fact over in silence), at the foot of the walls of Rome, poising in his hands a long ladder, surrounded by a rabble of the most lawless ruffians, that ever took the name of soldiers; who, under the command of Bourbon, were waiting to storm the capital of the Christian world. The ladder of Fanfulla, (no sooner said than done,) was placed against the battlements; and was quickly filled by as many of those fiendish wretches, as there were steps. On the topmost, of course, was Fanfulla; who was seen by his comrades, a moment after, to hurry along the battlements, and then disappear amid the smoke of the guns; and though they attempted to follow him, they were for a time driven back; nor could they surmount the walls till some minutes afterwards.

All that the most fertile imagination could conceive, of deeds the most horrible and atrocious, with a view of picturing to itself an adequate representation of the sack of Rome, on this memorable occasion, would still fall far short of the reality of those horrors, the record of which historians have handed down to us.

One day passed; a second, and a third in like manner; and the soldiers began to ask, " Where's Fanfulla? " " What has become of Fanfulla?" All inquired for him; but Fanfulla appeared not.

They who know the nature of soldiers' feelings, will find no difficulty in believing, that, in spite of all this eagerness in inquiring for their comrade, the missing him, the asking for him, thinking him dead and buried, and not troubling their heads any more about him, did not altogether occupy more than a quarter of an hour.

But Fanfulla was not dead. He was enjoying his ease in the cellar of a canon of Saint Mary Trasteverine ; where he had shut himself up, taking with him the master and his servant, in order that they might point out the best casks. Having remained there as long as he felt disposed, he sallied forth again at the end of three days. But the poor canon, whether it was from fright, at finding himself all that time at the mercy of such a bravo ; who, he expected every moment, would sweep off his head with a back-handed stroke of his sword ; or whether it was the maltreatment he underwent; as Fanfulla, when intoxicated, used by way of pastime, to insist on his learning from him the art of fence, and when he did not show himself as diligent at his lessons as he wished, would visit him with most unmerciful punishment; however it was, so it fell out, that he became ill, and in a few days died.

We are now approaching a point in his history, at which it will be in our power to speak well of our worthy man of Lodi. Yet we must first narrate his concluding folly; which by no means falsifies the vulgar proverb—that, " The tail is always the hardest to gnaw."

Sallying forth then, sottish and stupefied from the cellar of the canon, he found the city taken, and entirely in the power of the assailants. The churches, the palaces, the private houses, the unhappy citizens, and all their possessions, in a word, everything, in the power, I will not say of the army—for this expression supposes chiefs who command, and soldiers who obey,—but of that band of assassins, a set of lawless, faithless, ruthless, pitiless miscreants.

Clement VII., from the summit of the Castle of St. Angelo, where he was confined, could mark the conflagration as it continued its devastating progress through the city. He could hear the cries, the moans, and the lamentations of those who were subjected to torture to induce them to discover their concealed treasures, mingled with the furious shouts, the ferocious laughter, and the licentious merriment of the victors.

In the streets of Rome might be seen, here a house burning, there another recently destroyed by the flames, and now become a mere blackened shell. On the tops of the walls, which still remained standing, you might see blazing timbers, ready to come toppling down, and projecting in every direction. Beneath heaps of ruins, and crushed by piles of rubbish and fragments of furniture, all blackened by the fire, lay numerous corpses, of which many that had lost every trace of resemblance to humanity just showed from beneath the heaps under which they were buried an arm, a foot, or a head, all smeared with blood, foul and loathsome to behold. Further off, some palace gate, torn from its hinges, was falling with a heavy crash: the horde of plunderers rushed in with a fierce shout, and in a moment, from the cellars to the garrets, every part was filled with these agents of destruction. From the windows, which were quickly demolished, were thrown down into the street, in wild confusion, chests, chairs, tables, pictures, vases, bronzes, silk coverlets, vessels, and utensils of every description. Among those who were waiting to receive the plunder in the street below, you might here see one who had been maimed or wounded by some article of furniture that had lighted on him; there, others who were furiously contesting the same prize, with drawn swords aiming deadly blows; while, in the meantime, a fresh mob would come up, who wrested it from both and made off with it. Every now and then a loud and general shout would be heard; all eyes were turned to see—all mouths gaping with wonder. "Where?—What's the matter?" "Look there, up there!" All look aloft; at a window, standing up, or kneeling down, or half hanging out of the window, some high-born matron, or some aged woman, pale and haggard, who had been kicked aside like a log, was seen imploring pity, or uttering cries of despair. The crowd speedily demanded their victim: "Throw her down—throw her down!" They hurled her down, and she came to the ground amid laughter and jeers, and fell dashed and mangled on the pavement, or was caught midway on the points of the lances that were raised aloft to transfix them. When the whole interior had been gutted, they set fire to the houses, so that, if the owners lay anywhere concealed, they were forced from their hiding-places by the flames.

Sometimes discovered in their retreats without such means, in the passages, in the cellars, in the sewers, they were forcibly dragged out, beaten, and treated with every refinement of cruelty. When brought into the light of day, to which they had so long been strangers, they stood senseless and stupefied; and many became insane at the sight of those horrid countenances, inflamed with rage and wine, and displaying a fiendish exultation in murdering, destroying, and ravishing; at the sight of those daggers, which every moment gleamed before their eyes; the cords and the red-hot irons prepared to torture them; at the sight of female children, outraged with every species of barbarity, and then treated with derision; women, if old or without attractions, thrown headlong down stairs, or beaten to death; little boys subjected to such vile and infamous cruelties that their very parents, in the excess of their misery, found it an aggravation to their anguish to see them alive.

In the churches the images of the saints were thrown down and broken to pieces; the pictures and the panels of the altars were defaced or burnt; the sacred vessels and the ornaments were broken up, in order to divide the plunder more readily. When they had completed their havoc they turned them into barracks for the soldiery, who quartered there, with their mules and horses, converting the altars into mangers. The benches and the confessionals, hewed into billets, were blazing in one corner, beneath cauldrons or spits laden with meat; and in another, the soldiers were carousing, night and day, at tables constantly spread with strumpets, drunken, and decked out in sacerdotal vestments. In the midst of all this riot and disorder were to be seen nuns, matrons, and little girls of noble families, whom fright, and blows, and every species of ill usage had deprived of their reason, no longer conscious where they were or what they were doing, but exposed to the wantonness and barbarity of these abandoned wretches, who assailed their ears with ribald jeers and shouts, with horrid blasphemies and obscene songs.

The church of St. John of the Florentines had been, among other churches, transformed in the manner we have detailed, into a mess-room for the soldiers, into a stable and a stew; when at night-fall Fanfulla entered, having just come from the canon's cellar. He had on his corslet only: his helmet, his armlets, his greaves, were all bound together by a strap into a bundle, which hung at his back, supported across his shoulder by his sword, which he held with his left hand.

On his head was the canon's cap, beneath which peered his countenance, which had a wild appearance, half cheerful, half drowsy, from the heavy draughts in which he had indulged.

He stopped at the door whistling, and began to reconnoitre the strange hurley-burley within. On the tops of several casks, standing on end, were ranged window-shutters, planks, and doors, which formed a table the whole length of the nave. There was no cloth spread upon it, but this defect was amply compensated—chalices, pyxes, patens, and vases of silver, skilfully carved by the chisel, after the manner of Benvenuto Cellini, jars and goblets, which had adorned the tables of cardinals and prelates, were now glittering in the bronzed and brawny hands of the soldiery.

The candlesticks of the altars served to illuminate these orgies; and probably, because there were not enough, there were thrust, here and there, in the clefts of the tables, pieces of candle, some long, some short, some broken and fallen down, so that the lighted wick, coming in contact with the table, at last set it on fire, without anybody caring to extinguish it. At one end was placed a jar of oil, to serve as a lamp, and an altar cloth twisted up, was made to serve for a wick; at the other, was a half-barrel, in which were placed about fifty candles, the flames of which, uniting in one, formed a single light of great brilliancy.

On either side of the table, seated on the benches of the Church, one might be seen intent on his meal, which he was ingorging; another lay asleep, with his head on his arms; parties of four and six were playing at lansquenet and various games, and every now and then, without anybody's knowing why, there was a clamorous contention, and a bandying of ill-names, when the disputants would rush at each other, seize hold of each other's hair, and brandish their daggers. One or other fell, wounded or dead, and lay beneath the table with others who were already there, buried in sleep or stupefied with wine; their companions, all the time, as if nothing had happened, continued their game. One great fellow was extended at full length on the table itself, his face downwards, and all covered with the wine that had been spilt from the glasses he had overturned, his muddy boots overlaying silver salvers, and he himself immersed in sleep, seemed totally unconscious of the wild scenes that were going on around him.

The vilest strumpets revelled in this scene of confusion, just as flies are seen floating on the surface of foul water. They ran hither and thither with eyes inflamed and cheeks flushed, some half-naked, others almost entirely so; received at one time with brutal caresses, at another with insults or with blows and kicks, and equally indifferent to either kind of treatment.

One soldier had seated himself astride an empty cask, and was blowing away on a fife. He made its shrill sounds heard above the voices, the shouts, the songs and the general hubbub of the rest: another with a bridle, to which bells were attached, was striking the cask with vigorous blows, as it were to beat time; a third was beating a censer upon a kettle; and to this diabolical music, those who could still keep their feet, were attempting to dance.

Fanfulla stopped a moment at the threshold, sickened with the fumes of wine, the vapour and the stench that reeked within. At last he came forward, and disburdened himself of the accoutrements which he bore on his shoulder, by throwing them down on the table, without heeding the vessels or the glasses, of which he smashed every one that came in contact with his bundle. The rattle of the falling arms, the breaking of plates and glasses, drew the attention of some one who was sitting at the table. Looking up and recognising him, he exclaimed, "Ah, Fanfulla!"

Immediately a second and a third, and soon all, began to bawl out to him, clapping their hands, or beating the table with their fists.

"Fanfulla! Fanfulla's come back! the one-eye, (for so he had been nicknamed, since the accident by which he lost the other,) is risen from the dead!"—"Long live the one-eyed dog!"—"We thought you had been down below these three days!"—"Where have you been, villain, all this time?"—"Come hither and drink;—ho, there! wine, meat, capons, curses for Fanfulla; he has found his way back!"—"Long live Fanfulla!—Long live the jolly one-eyed rascal!"

This last cheer, formed by the united voices of almost all, served to drown the sounds of the fife, made a pause in the jingling of the bells, and stopped the man with his censer; the dancing ceased, and even the brawny fellow who stretched his length on the table, for a moment raised his hideous visage, looked around him, and, uttering a curse, soon relapsed into his heavy slumber.

The person who was thus welcomed with such marks of joyous delight (though the reader, from what has been previously said, will not interpret them as signs of any great degree of real affection)—our friend Fanfulla—was standing still, with his arms folded on his breast, smiling complacently at finding that he held so high a place in the regard of such choice spirits.

A female who acted as cook now came forward, all in tatters and begrimed with smoke and grease, bearing the viands which had been ordered; but Fanfulla, with a toss of his hand, sent platter and its contents flying through the air.

"What! do you think I want anything to eat? Do you take me for a fellow who has been dying of starvation?"

The woman hastily retreated, quite terrified, and Fanfulla, taking off the canon's cap, placed it on the head of the person who stood nearest to him, and shouted, "Wine!"

“ Thou must first tell us where thou hast been these three days.”

“ I !—I have been in company with some thirty thousand pairs of devils, who are ready to carry you away, every one of you ! Wine ! ”

In order not to fatigue the reader with their coarse jests, we will just say, that after taking a draught of wine (and God knows it was not poured on a thirsty soul !) he recounted, as well as he could, with clammy tongue and indistinct utterance, his adventures at the canon’s house. At the end of every sentence, where the writer would put a full stop, the narrator swallowed a cup of wine ; and the periods, contrary to the usage of the cinque-centists, were short and frequent.

Presently some score of ruffians came rushing into the church, dragging along with them a poor, miserable-looking old man, whom they had literally exhumed, having drawn him forth from an underground cellar, in which he was discovered crouching down in the furthest recess. He seemed to be about seventy years of age ; he was trembling in every limb, and almost bent double ; he had scarce anything on but his shirt, which just reaching to his knees, showed his bare and scanty thighs. The bones protruded at the joints, and his legs were thin and wasted. He still had on a scarlet hose, hanging about him in tatters, the sole remains of the purple ; for this poor old man, who was being subjected to such cruel indignities, was a cardinal ; a man, who was charitable and without pride; who, in his deportment, displayed the mildness of an angel, and in his life, the purity of a saint. When he was first discovered, he gave up to the soldiers what little he had been able to save, hastily putting it aside, when the cry ran through the city, that the walls of Rome had been scaled. The treasure was small indeed, as he was in the habit of giving away all he possessed in alms, so that the soldiers, not being able to believe there could be a poor cardinal, took it for granted that he would not disclose his real treasures, and that avarice was stronger in him than the love of life. They attempted at first to terrify him; from words they had recourse to blows; they stripped the clothes from off his back, and beat him unmercifully with the hilt of their swords and poniards. When they found everything unavailing, they hurried him away to the church of the Florentines, to see what effect torture would have upon him.

The cries and uproar increased, if possible, at the appearance of this strange mob, which halted in front of the cask, on which was seated the man with the fife. This latter began to act as judge, and to interrogate the poor old man, who no sooner saw the hideous and abominable profanations that everywhere met his eyes, than forgetting his own dangers and misfortunes, he covered his eyes with his thin emaciated hands, and wept aloud. The heartless soldiers, however, tired of trying threats, were about to proceed to deeds. Already a Lutheran soldier, one of those who had come into Italy with George Frundsberg, was bringing a red-hot iron to commence the operation of torture, when he felt himself seized by the wrist of his right arm, by a hand that held him as in a vice, and the iron fell at his feet.

The hand was Fanfulla's. Intoxication had with this worthy two stages. In the first he was cheerful and lively, full of mirth and frolicsome, so long as he had not indulged too plentifully. If after this he went on drinking, he arrived at the second; and then he became melancholy, all tenderness, and even fond in his manner to any one that came across him. At this critical moment he was in the latter mood, fortunately for the aged captive. He hurled back the soldier with such force that he almost made him perform a somerset, and then cried out—

"This is not the way to treat gentlemen—a christian's body is not to be tortured after this fashion!—vile race of apostate dogs!—yes, dogs—dogs—I say, beasts! Think ye that I am afraid of ye, because there are so many of you! Look, how they have treated this poor old man! And yet the wretches show no signs of shame! Poor old man! but don't be afraid—(and all this while he kept fawning on him with caresses and embraces) don't be afraid—your good friend Fanfulla is here!—you'll see what a thrashing I'll give 'em. They're a vile crew, without religion, Lutherans, excommunicated, guilty of every villainy—what can you expect?"

"And you, you fool," exclaimed one of these maddened ruffians, "what do you expect? Do you think you can extract money from a cardinal, without the cord or the faggot?"

"By the sacred character which I bear as a prelate of the holy church," said the aged cardinal, extending his lean and trembling hands towards his persecutors, "I swear to you that I have nothing else—no gold, no silver—nothing, nothing—you have taken all."

"Oh, tell that to this pair of boots!" exclaimed one of those who had accompanied him to the church; and throwing down a bundle before him, which he had just undone, there fell out a few sacred vestments, a silver basin and ewer, two breviaries, and other trifles of little value. "See, here's a treasure," he continued; "and this is all he possesses, and a cardinal too! Just look into his mouth, and see if the child has cut his teeth. Bring hither the hot irons, body and blood; I'll frizzle his heart!"

Fanfulla this time, too, interposed, and prevented the execution of this brutal threat.

"Hark'ee, my good lord cardinal," he said in an under tone; "I scent death! Remember, these men are very devils, a low, ill-bred, ruthless race. With them words avail little; they understand nothing but ducats and florins, without these they'll make short work with you. With them, killing a christian is all one, as brushing a fly off their nose. Without the zecchins, the mammon of unrighteousness, as, I think, you priests call it, they'd spit you like a partridge. Come, come, a word's soon said—trust your old friend Fanfulla, whisper in my ear—hark'ee! where's the dead buried?"

"Nay, I have already told you I have no concealed treasures. That God who now sees us, knows that I am a poor priest—do you think I would expose myself thus, to save a purse of florins?"

Fanfulla shrugged his shoulders, and thoughtfully shaking his head, replied—

"Well, well, I believe all this in my way, and you shall tell it in yours." Then, bending down low, he whispered into the Cardinal's ear, keeping one hand on his shoulder, which he pressed harder and harder as he proceeded. "Do you take me, eh? It's a matter of life and death. What reply am I to give? If you trifle with them thus, you will have to smart for it. Of course, you know, you need not give all (then lowering his voice to prevent his words from being heard) a thousand crowns—zecchins, 'twill be better—no great matter that! These swine are all drunk—we must mind what we are about. I am alone, and with so many a single one in his senses is no match for them. I pray you do not irritate them into torturing you, my good lord Cardinal!"

This dialogue continued a little longer in this strain, and ended as might be supposed. The old man maintained that he had nothing more; and it was the fact. The soldiers were still of opinion that he had; and the result was that they persisted in their design of forcing him by torture to disclose his hidden wealth.

Fanfulla's wish to save him was powerless in opposition to the determination of so many. So that when he perceived that matters were becoming really desperate, he rushed into the midst of them, clearing a passage for himself, and shouting like a man possessed with a fury.

"Stay, my men! wait a moment, tell me what you think of this plan. Let us place him on a bier and carry him round the city with tapers, as in a funeral procession. Who knows but that when he comes to find himself likely to take a peep at the other world, he'll return to his senses!"

A burst of discordant voices greeted this proposal. All speaking at once, some approved, some ridiculed, and others rejected the plan. At last, however, the majority, expecting to derive some amusement from this mock solemnity, and taken by the very extravagance of the fancy, decided that it should at once be put in execution. They quickly furnished themselves with wax-tapers, a bier, mourning dresses, and friars' cloaks. This wild set entered with ardour into the spirit of the thing, and soon they were seen to defile out of the church, with the poor old man stretched upon the bier.

You might see one with a cope turned inside out; another with a stole, beneath which a sword was peeping out about three inches from the ground. Fanfulla, with a broom, which he had dipped in a bucket of wine, and which he used as an asperges, to sprinkle those who were near him, preceded the body; then followed such hideous faces as may God ever deliver us from!—women amongst the rest of a fiendish aspect, worse even than that of the men. A prolonged chant, or rather howl, resounded from the mob, with which they pretended to be imitating the priests. Here, one was laughing; there, another shouting; some were imitating the cries of different animals, others whistling; one was beating the sides of an empty cask, another making a clatter with frying-pans and kitchen utensils: some sang snatches of obscene songs; and in a word, there was a wild confusion of voices, rendered harsh by drinking and shouting—a strange medley of German, Italian, and Spanish words, and of others besides; for in that vile rabble were to be found men of every country and of every race.

In this bacchanalian fashion did this savage horde several times make the circuit of Rome; and as night drew on, they returned to St. John's. Having deposited the bier on the ground, they said to the poor Cardinal,—

"Up, get up, and let us see how matters stand with you now; or else to business!"

But he was now beyond their power; they could torment him no more. The old man had been unable to bear up under such cruelties; he had expired in the street.

Fanfulla some days after, in passing near the gate of San Spirito, on his way to change the guard, was struck on the head by some falling fragments of a wall that had been loosened by the artillery. He was almost killed by the blow; and recovered but slowly and with difficulty, after the army had entered into a treaty with the Pope, and had departed from Rome laden with booty. The care which a poor priest had bestowed on him, benefited the soul no less than the body of Fanfulla; and we may now, at last, present him to our reader as a new man, altogether changed from what he was before; in fact, he was become a good man and a Christian. He felt that he had been guilty of grievous errors, and that he must therefore do his utmost to make amends for them by penance in this world, to escape the suffering of the world to come. He was hesitating between two courses—to marry, or become a monk. (Let not the fair reader take it amiss that he should hesitate at the alternative, but remember that, however good, he was Fanfulla still). At last he resolved upon the latter course. He started one morning from Rome on his good steed, with his armour on and his sword at his side. He carried with him, attached to the hilt of his sword, a rosary; he had also a scourge or discipline—articles which he made use of every night at his inn. Through Viterbo and Sienna, he at last arrived at Florence. Without dismounting, he went straight to the porter's lodge of the Convent of St. Mark, and knocked with the butt-end of his lance. The porter came out, and demanded what he wanted.

"Why, to show me the stable to put up my horse, as I purpose becoming a friar."

At first, the porter thought he was either beside himself or intoxicated; but after many questions, and many demurs—after an infinity of *buts*, and *hows*, and *why*, and *because*, he was induced to let him in, and present him to Father Benedict da Faenza, who, after hearing the request of this strange postulant, and casting an eye on his dress and figure, and the stern expression of his countenance, could not quite make up his mind whether he was in jest or earnest. Without giving him a precise reply, he waited for some days, during which, having had full opportunity to examine his vocation, he at last decided to listen no longer to any lingering doubts he might have, but to admit him at once as a laic.

Fanfulla laid aside all his accoutrements, put on the gown of St. Dominic, and took the name of Brother George da Lodi. In a few days he had made such progress in his new position, that he could make a very tolerable figure in the choir and in the refectory. His horse, too, who was now beginning to show signs of age, learnt to carry sacks to the mill, and to do other offices for the gardener. At the period in which we just now found his old master serving mass, about two years had elapsed from the time when they both changed the life of the camp for that of the cloister, both well satisfied with their new mode of existence. There was this difference, however, between the steed and his owner—that, in all probability, the former retained no remembrance of the time when he bore his rider in the conflicts of the battle; whereas the latter, on the contrary, cherished the most lively recollections of the days which he had passed in the adventures of the field.

CHAPTER III.

The requiem mass finished without any other disturbance. The celebrant priest performed the last rites over the corpse, and descended from the altar, preceded by three attendants, of whom, one carried the cross, and the other two, the tapers. Brother George followed with the vessel of holy water.

The crowd withdrew from the coffin, around which there remained only Niccolo and his son. The prayers were recited, the prescribed ceremonies were completed; and when the priest turned to go to the vestry, Niccolo, bidding Bindo approach, took hold of the shield and sword of Baccio, and holding them in his left hand, placed his right on the head of his son, to whom he said, "Bindo, this sword and this shield, which I give you, were Baccio's, whom you see here dead, after discharging the duty of a good citizen. Look into my eyes; can you discern any signs of tears in them?" The youth gave an intimation that he could not. "And if I weep not, know, that it is not for the little love that I bore to this my most dear son and your brother, but because, feeling that every man's first duty is to God and his religion, his second to his country, and that he ought to expend in their service his energies and his life; and because, it is certain that to those who do so, there is reserved in this life an honourable fame, and an eternal reward in the other, I consider his death enviable and glorious. If, then, I were to weep, because he has left us in the miseries of this life and is gone away to enjoy the infinite happiness of the life to come, I should appear to myself ungrateful to the divine goodness, and envious of the rich reward, which he has purchased by his virtues. Take, then, these arms, in the name of God; show yourself valiant as Baccio was; and with them, either conquer or die; and as ever you dread the malediction of your father, and deprecate the anger of God, and would escape ignominy among men, ever keep before your eyes, the unmoved countenance, and the unbending heart, that you have seen me preserve at the coffin of a son, who fell so bravely. Be assured, I could see you in his place with the same unaltered eye,—God would give me the strength,—yes, be assured (and here he raised aloft, in a stern and terrible attitude, the hand which till then was resting on Bindo's head) that if you, which God forbid—should ever show yourself—no, no, I will not sully my lips with the words—nor even dream of such degeneracy in one of my race. Enough—you understand me!—If ever you set store by your life, may these eyes never see you more."

At the close of this speech, which from being uttered by a man of such gravity, on so important an occasion, and in so impressive a manner, strongly affected Bindo and all present, he proceeded to buckle on the sword. The youth raised his arm for the purpose of allowing him to do so; but the belt, which was adjusted to Baccio's size, was too loose for Bindo. Niccolo said, "Thou art too slim, my poor Bindo!" And adjusting the buckle three or four holes farther back, he added, "It will do very well now." But he reflected at the same time on the hard necessity, which rendered it incumbent on a youth of such tender years, to expose himself to such dangers; he thought of the ruin which threatened his country, and on the authors of that ruin; a shade passed over his countenance, and he could not suppress a sigh, while he was buckling on the girdle. That done, he turned to John Gondi, who was standing by his ensign, as Captain of the Golden Lion, clad down to his knees with a very handsome coat of mail.

"Sir John," he said to him, with a calm voice, and steady countenance, "if *I* have lost a son, *you* have not lost a soldier. See, here I present to you this youth, in the stead of Baccio; and I trust in God, that he will show himself nowise inferior. And you, brave citizens, do not disdain to receive him as a comrade, because he is so youthful. David was but a stripling, when he overthrew Goliah."

The whisperings and half-audible expressions, that rose from among the soldiers, testified their admiration and respect for Niccolo, their regard and affection for the young lad.

"He is of a stock that never fails." "This old man is of tried metal." "See, if a tear ever trickled from his eye!—and his son! I can tell you he is no chicken. Give him a year or two more!" "A year or two!—go to the fencing school, where he learns the science of parry and thrust, any morning, and you 'll see how he handles his weapons. 'Twas but the other day, in a bout with Morticino, (and you know what a devil he is) he gave him such a taste of his skill, that they were nearly turning their jest into earnest."

At this moment, a soldier came forward with a book, in which were inscribed the men of the company, into which he was about to be enrolled; he opened it, and laid it before Gondi, who, after he had written a few lines in it, presented it to Niccolo.

Niccolo read in a loud voice the following words:—

"This — day of October, 1529, Bindo, son of Niccolo de Lapi, of the district of St. John,—very well—that 'll do. Listen to me, Bindo! remember that henceforth this (pointing to the standard) is your home, and these (turning to the soldiers) are your brothers. Now kneel down" (Bindo doing as he was directed, his father placed his hand on his head, and raising his eyes to heaven, said in a loud voice); "Bindo, I give thee my blessing."

The reader now knows sufficient of the position and character of the actors in this scene, to form an idea of the various emotions which they experienced at such a moment. For some moments no one moved, or even spoke. Bindo, alone, rising up, threw his right arm (his left was thrust into his shield) around his father's neck, and his head resting on his breast, he remained in that position without moving. The aged father twined his trembling fingers in the rich locks of his son's hair; and when the latter raised his head, and withdrew from his father's embrace, some few tears trickled down the old man's face.

Many of the soldiers, who had been among Baccio's friends, then approached the bier, and one after the other made the sign of the cross with the wax of the consecrated tapers. The motion of their lips showed that they were reciting a prayer, in an under tone, for the repose of his soul.

Father Benedict, who had now approached with some of his brethren, to offer a few words of consolation to Niccolo, before he left the church, addressed him in a gentle and soothing tone.

"Father Benedict," said the old man, as he was turning to depart, "I pray you in your prayers to remember Lambert, that God may restore him to us safe and sound. He has written to me to say that he will be in Florence in a few days; but the horsemen of the Marquis del Vasto have been seen on the road to Bologna. God forbid that—Lisa, don't be alarmed," he continued, turning to his daughter, who, on hearing these words, showed symptoms of agitation, " Lambert is no fool, and knows how to manage; and ere many days are elapsed, with the help of God, he will be out of the reach of danger."

Lisa, nestling close to her sister, concealed her face in such a manner, that it was impossible to discover with what feelings she had listened to her father's words. Those among the bystanders who knew the tender relations that were supposed to exist between Lambert and Lisa, guessed that that concealment arose from the bashfulness which young maidens are wont to manifest on similar occasions. Niccolo, in the meantime, surrounded by his family, and followed by all who were in the church, went out; and there remained no one else in St. Mark's but the sacristan, who, after he had drawn a sheet over the face of the corpse, and extinguished the lights, also quitted the church by the door of the sacristy.

Brother George, when the mass was ended, had retired to his cell, and shut himself in. The burst of laughter that had escaped from him in the church, distressed him: he was aware that he had been guilty of an impropriety, and felt that anger against himself, which springs up in the heart, when we feel it a duty to strive constantly against inveterate habits. The desire of atoning for the errors of his past life by the austerities of the cloister, was not a whit cooled; and in these, his first two years, matters had gone on smoothly enough. If, now and then, his thoughts reverted to deeds of arms, admonished by his superiors, he regarded them as the temptations of the Evil One, and generally succeeded in chasing them away. He had also been successful in subduing his wayward nature, of itself impatient of restraint, easily inflamed, and prompt in passing from words to deeds. The other brothers, considering who he had been, bore with him good-humouredly; and though, perhaps, they had no great affection for him, because his odd ways ill suited these men of peace and retirement, (and amongst themselves they used to call him Brother Bombard,) yet, when speaking of him, they generally ended by saying, "He fancies he is every now and then standing with his lance by his side; and can't bear to be molested. But, after all, he's not a bad fellow."

But when the preparations for the siege were going on; when, throughout Florence, nothing was to be seen but cavalry, and infantry, and men of all arms; and, night and day, was to be heard the incessant roar of artillery, the roll of drums, the sound of the trumpet and the fife; when nothing else was spoken of but the modes of offence and defence, and the daily events of the war; then the habit of St. Dominic began to appear to Brother George heavier than half-a-dozen suits of armour. At night, in the quiet of the dormitory, when around him the silence was uninterrupted, save by the snorings, deep and loud, of the brothers who slept in the adjoining cells, the poor laic slept scarcely at all, roused at every instant by the images of battle that presented themselves in his dreams, if he closed his eyes but for a moment. Compelled to watch, he turned to his devotions; in case these were insufficient to inspire holy thoughts, he seized furiously on a scourge which always hung suspended at the head of his bed, which he vigorously applied across his shoulders, with his face bent to the earth, his eyes closed, and furiously grinding his teeth. In this conflict with himself, he exercised little pity; in the same way as he had manifested but little in the real encounters of war. Frequently his temptation arose from causes actual and present. The distant trampling of a troop of cavalry caused him with bated breath to listen eagerly: now the sound became more and more distinct; they were deploying in the Grand Square of St. Mark; as they passed beneath his window, the reverberations made the very window-panes rattle; now they receded further and further, and the sound died away. Then, once more, he breathed freely. By long practice, he was able to distinguish, in the midst of the uproar, all the different sounds, and the causes which produced them. He was able to say, "That is a blow on a shield; that, a sword-thrust, which has lighted on the greaves; that, again, a horse, which has been pricked by the spur, whose foot has slipped on the pavement."

Such a life of continual uneasiness had at last entirely deprived him of sleep, and he seemed almost beside himself. In the daytime he was insufferable to his equals, and sullen to his superiors; and every time that a discharge of cannon smote upon his ear, he muttered to himself, "I can't abide this idle life."

When he had first devoted himself to the ascetic life, his health and constitution had been exhausted and enfeebled by a long course of dissipation; and perhaps, without wronging him, this depression of his physical powers had partly decided his choice of it. But the quiet and methodical life of the cloister had restored him; and once more feeling well and vigorous, he could not refrain from ejaculating, ever and anon, "I can't abide this idle life."

These words had, on the present occasion, scarce escaped from his lips, when he heard the step of a person approaching the door of his cell, followed by a tap, and the salutation, "*Deo gratias.*"

"*Semper Deo gratias,*" replied Brother George; "Come in;" but the ill-humour with which he uttered these words was little in harmony with their meaning. On the door opening, there appeared a lay brother, who said, "Father Benedict wishes to see you."

Brother George readily conjectured the meaning of this summons, and said to himself, "Now I am in for it;" but yet he strode away with a careless air, and resolved, as he walked along, since an opportunity presented itself, to use his utmost exertions to get free from his present unsatisfactory position. He found the Superior at his writing-desk, with his spectacles on, reading a folio edition of St. Augustine. The good father raised his nose into the air, in order to bring into one and the same line the pupils of his eyes, the lenses of his spectacles, and the laic's face. He looked at him for a moment, as if he expected to read in his physiognomy how far he might go in dosing him with his admonitions.

Brother George's countenance was modest and demure; but his modesty, though mingled with an air of dejection, somehow or other was calculated to inspire fear. The good old man, however, taking courage, and overcoming the repugnance which he felt to enter on matters which called for severity, with such a man, removed his spectacles, and placing them on the book said,—

" Brother George, for some time past I have observed certain things in your conduct that pain me. Perhaps I ought to have called your attention to them before; but being slow to think ill of you, and ever expecting that you would change, I have hitherto remained quiet; but now I must not shrink from my duty. What new fancies have seized you, my son? I find you no longer attentive, as formerly, to your duties. At one time you were always in Church, and it was hardly possible to withdraw you from your devotions. Till now, you were wont to listen to reproof with a serene countenance, all zeal to do well; now, I observe you maintain a sullen aspect;—if one speaks to you, you take it ill; the brothers of the monastery do nothing but say, ‘ Brother George is quite a different man; there is no keeping terms with him.’ Remember, my son, you have sacrificed the greater part of your life to the world: heaven might have left you in the path of destruction; but instead of that, has shown you mercy; do not withdraw what you have consecrated to its service, now that you have dedicated the years that remain of your life to a life of religion; turn not back, my son. This morning, at mass, I need not remind you of what happened. The impropriety and scandal of such behaviour I am grieved to animadvert upon, because I may seem personally concerned in it. I would not that any ill-will should be felt between us, from your having laughed at me, and the alarm I exhibited. I too was wrong, my son, I confess it: had I been occupied with the thought of God, as I ought, I should not have been so discomposed at so slight a matter. What then remains for both of us, but that we humble ourselves; that we confess ourselves so frail, that we must fall at every step, except the divine grace upholds us; and therefore, that we fail not to do what in us lies, by prayer and penance, to obtain it.”

Brother George, whom a harsh repoof would probably have irritated, felt himself touched by the gentleness and humility of the Superior. “ You are a saint,” he exclaimed, “ and I have a thousand faults, but—”

" No, my son, I am not a saint, but a sinner worse than yourself, and only too well do I know it. But at present, this is not to the point. I rejoice to perceive that you are conscious of your error; indeed I hoped as much. Evil habits are like weeds: you may eradicate them in one place, but they spring up in another. I pity you. To have lived so many years in camps, among licentious soldiery, habituates the mind to that unsettled mode of life, which abounds in vicissitude and adventure; and if afterwards one wishes to settle down, the change is full of difficulty. I pity you. But," he continued, with a gentle smile, in order that a slight tincture of humour might soften still more the asperity of his reproof, " even here we have our wars and fightings, and our old enemies have to be destroyed: in this war all must buckle on their armour, and we, more than others, have this duty to perform; we must be ever on the alert, and ever fighting: *violenti rapiunt illud.*"

Before giving the reply of brother George, we beg the reader to call to mind, whether it has ever happened to him to be talking with a person on a subject, in which he is himself greatly interested, and in the course of conversation a word is dropped which forcibly arrests his attention, and absorbs his mind; and whether he has observed, that though the other continues his discourse, yet he is so taken up with the thoughts that have been set in action, that he does not hear him. Afterwards, recalling his attention, he is desirous of recovering the thread of the discourse, but not having caught the intervening observations, they are mutually perplexed, and in order to understand one another, have to begin the discourse all over again. If this situation is one in which my reader has ever found himself, it may probably have been the worse for the despatch of his business, but it is certainly the better for his understanding this story, for this was exactly the position of brother George.

Having discovered from the tone and language of the superior, that he was better looked upon than he expected, instead of listening attentively to the conclusion of his address, he set himself to consider in what manner he could best inform him that he did not wish to remain a friar any longer, so that all the good father's harangue reached his ear indeed, but did not make its way to his understanding. It was only when these last phrases caught his ear—" Even here we have our wars: in this war all must buckle on their armour," &c. that he recollected himself, and his giddy brain, which had a hard matter to carry more than one idea at a time, interpreted the expressions entirely according to his own secret wishes. He now felt quite revived, and said to himself: " He too, is now aware, that if we do not all render assistance in fighting these Imperialists; and unless, even the monks too, lend a hand, matters will end badly. All evil, I see, is not harm. The fracas of the morning has made him think matters are becoming serious."

These reflections, which have required all this explanation, passed through the mind of brother George with the rapidity of lightning; who, now regarding every difficulty surmounted, exclaimed with the eagerness and impetuosity of one who suddenly sees a door open to his hopes—" Father Benedict, there's nothing in the world that I desire more; and if I have appeared so perverse for some time past, be assured that this has been the cause of it; for, by the help of God, I still consider myself fit for something; and indeed, it has appeared to me, that in this war I have shown myself too remiss. This I feel, that to take up arms will be a meritorious action in the sight of God, and therefore I design to do so—and I'll do it with all my heart; and so may heaven render me worthy of obtaining its glory; and would that it were done to-day rather than to-morrow."

The old man, still continuing to understand all this in his own way, was somewhat amazed at witnessing such fervour in the laic, since he expected just the reverse, and said within himself: " Ah! well, he has taken the right direction at last." Well pleased, therefore, to find him the subject of such excellent dispositions, he rejoined: " Bless you, my son; bless you a thousand times! Now we understand each other," and with a smile he placed his hand on his shoulder; " you cavaliers, if you have much ado to turn into the right path, yet when you do do so, you do it without regret or reservation: everything consists in kind and judicious guidance. Go on then; that brave spirit that you have shown in war for worldly objects, it is time now to put in action, in this conflict of the soul, for heavenly ones: the contest will be long and severe, the enemy potent and astute—*leo rugiens*—but God will be with you—fear not."

"Me fear!" exclaimed brother George, in surprise; "I never yet knew what complexion fear was of. And," he added, in an under tone, "you best know who understands the meaning of that word."

"I know it, I know it: fear is no part of your nature, but remember, it is ill trusting in our own strength; but I'll say no more on that just now. Let us not approach too near the fire, or—but go, and God be with you, to assist you with his strength."

Brother George turned to depart. When he had reached the door a thought struck his mind, and coming back, he said, "Father Benedict, I have a favour to ask you."

"What is it, my son—if it is within my power?"

"Oh! as for that, it will be sufficient that you do not object. But I remember me of the old proverb,

'Who asks again what once is given,
Is fitter far for hell than heaven;'

but yet, I can do no otherwise—you will not take it ill?"

"Good, my son; speak without hesitation."

"Well then, you see, I'm not used to go afoot. I am of the old school, mark you: for it is only for these twenty years agone that brave and valiant gentlemen are to be found serving on foot. The brave Gonzalo Hernandes, the Great Captain, as they call him, and of whom no doubt you have heard speak, was the first to introduce this new custom; and to say truth, with no small success; for on the field of Cerignola, the valiant Frenchmen, —oh, if you had seen them charge the battalions of Spanish infantry, you would have thought they were going to hack them to pieces; but they stood firm, their lances in rest, and seemed as if nailed to the earth. The Frenchmen came pelting on to the cry of St. Denis! St. Denis! like thunderbolts: but there was no St. Denis to the rescue: it was like beating against a bastion."

The reader may imagine how Father Benedict opened his eyes on hearing this speech, and thought brother George's brain was quite turned. But he had not done yet.

"Well; to say no more about the infantry, there are brave men among them, too. But every one to his own way; I am now too old to learn new tactics: and if you want me to bear myself valiantly, you must allow me—I know it may seem somewhat bold and presuming—you will be surprised—but to such a pass are matters come in the city, that not with two hundred ducats—for he who has got one, wants it for himself; and besides, who would furnish me with such a sum?

In a word, not to lengthen my story, if you don't permit me to make use of the services of my horse, I shall make but a sorry figure."

In the midst of this speech, Father Benedict had once more put on his glasses, and leaning with his arms on his chair, he bent forward, and raising his head towards the lay brother, looked at him with a fixed gaze. When he had concluded, the old man was silent for a moment, with his eye still bent upon him. At last, in a tone of voice that expressed the greatest astonishment, he exclaimed two or three times:

"Horse! horse! What in the name of goodness have you to do with a horse? What have you been thinking about all this time? Have I said anything to you about tilting or tournaments?"

"But, my father, it's no question just now of tournaments. It's the fierce onslaught of actual war; and, as I say, I feel still nerve and heart enough to play the soldier — but, mark you! *mounted*, not afoot."

"And who has charged you to play the soldier, either mounted or a-foot? God bless me! what foolish fancies are these? I bid you perform the duty of a good monk,—to attend to your soul—to the things of God,—and you come out to me with words about horses, and lances, and infantry. I think you are making a jest of me! Go; go! I now see what you would be at. And yet I listened to all this! Oh Lord, oh Lord! grant me patience with such a fellow!"

"Father Benedict, be not angry with me," replied the friar, now perceiving his mistake, and sore distressed at finding himself just where he was at the outset, after fancying that he had so nicely arranged matters. "No harm's done—you understood all this one way, whilst I understood it another."

But when he saw that the superior was silent, and in a state of agitation that boded no good, he at once resolved, since he had now disclosed his own views and feelings, to make an attempt at carrying his point; and coming within arm's length, he said, with the determined resolution of one who is not to be diverted from his purpose,—"Father Benedict, listen to me. If you had not sent for me, I was on the point of coming myself; since I am so ill at ease, that I can endure this life no longer. I confess I was guilty of an impropriety this morning at mass, and I pray you, pardon me; as I trust also, that Heaven will. I admit that the rest of the brotherhood have a thousand reasons to be offended with me, and that my behaviour comports not with that of a good monk. I am a wretch! a sinner!—but what am I to do, if I find that I do nothing but fret and chafe,—if I lose my rest?—if, night and day, I consume my heart with vague longings to mount the walls when the sounds of artillery greet my ear? What am I to do, if I have a nature so strange, so wayward—say, if you like, so perverse—that I am never happy but when I find myself amidst bristling lances, and roaring guns—amid wounds and carnage? I have not failed in the performance of the duties that you have enjoined, to extinguish these wandering desires;—fastings, prayers, penance. They have been no good at all! And even now, I protest that my heart is not withdrawn a finger's breadth from the glorious St. Dominic, nor from his holy rule; and that under it I wish to live and die. I remember my sins, and know that I must do penance for them; and I will do it. With regard to this war, I wish neither for any private advantage therefrom, nor yet for promotion; nor do I pursue any worldly end. I merely wish to take part therein, because I cannot put up with this idle life—I should go mad. I wish to aid in defending our free state, even as the blessed Savonarola enjoined. And as for penance, you do yours in the convent, I mine upon the battlements, amid snow and rain; you fast, and so shall I. You will practise the austerities of discipline with the scourge, and I shall encounter the battle-axe and the lance, which will amend me, God knows. Besides, I am not in holy orders; you yourself know, whether I know Latin or no! But even if I were, I well recollect the Cardinal Sanseverino—I saw him with these two eyes (for at that time I had two)—at the battle of Ravenna, on a beautiful Arab bay, as good a horseman, as bold and well armed, as the famous John himself;* and Napoleon Orsino,

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* He alludes to Giovanni, or John de Medici, who at that time was regarded by the Italian soldiers as the model of a thorough man-at-arms.

Abbot of Farfa, did he not scour the lands of Casentino with his troopers? and many others besides. And if ever the time could be, when even priests ought to join in the defence of their country, it is now. And if you want to know why I say this, I must tell you that the army now beleaguering the city is not one to be made a jest of. I see dark clouds closing around Florence; and if every man of us is not a match for three of the enemy, the day may come when we may have to rue it. I know those men—those Landsknechts and Bisogni*—I saw them at the sack of Rome, where I learnt to know them only too well; God pardon me! but if, some day or other, they succeed in storming this city, then farewell to everything. They will spare neither church steeple nor convent bell. Now you know my mind: I pray you, then, give me your good leave and licence; and, with the help of God, you shall have no cause to repent it."

The good old man, hearing him speak in such a determined tone, remained speechless. He was not, indeed, devoid of that courage which sustains the virtuous man in the endeavour to do his duty; but, as it may have been easily seen, the peculiar bravery of the soldier was no part of his nature, and it may well be imagined that he would rather be at the utmost possible distance from that glorious cannonading. So that now, seeing before him a man on the confines of old age, who seemed unable to live except amid the whizz of musket-balls, it appeared to him so absurd, that he thought the poor fellow beside himself. He therefore abstained from harsh words, and, hastily revolving the matter in his mind, he said to himself,—"It will be well to be rid of him on the easiest terms at once, before he does some of his strange tricks, and pulls our house about our ears;" and so, without any signs of anger, he replied,—

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* The *Bisogni* was a nick-name given to the Spanish soldiers, because their officers, in quartering them in the various towns, used to write in the front of all orders for supplies for their troops the words, "C'è bisogno, ec." (There is need.) [The Landsknechts, or Lanzi, was the name commonly applied to the German troops.—*Trans.*]

"Well, certainly, I should not have expected it, but if you have such a desire—though I cannot understand it—why, you must do as you please. Since you are not in holy orders, there is no obstacle to my acquiescence. But consider well the dangers to which you expose yourself: I'll say nothing of those that assail the body, but how will it fare with your soul? You are returning into your old ways, and to your evil companions—among wretches who will find you a thousand opportunities to do ill!"

"As for that, you say true; but God knows my motives, and He will help me."

"At all events, remember, that though defence is lawful, yet it ought to be conducted with the least possible damage to your enemies; *cum moderamine inculpatæ tutelæ*, you must confine yourself to the due limits of mere defence; aim your blows at the less vital parts; never at the head or breast."

The lay brother could not forbear a smile when he heard these directions, which proved how little the superior knew of the methods that are practised in war; but yet he heard to the close with downcast eyes (not even thinking his address tedious, such joy did he feel at finding himself on the point of becoming a soldier once more) the last admonitions of Father Benedict, full of counsels and precepts on charity, on prudence, on good and bad examples, and much more, too long to repeat word for word. When he had ended, brother George said,—

"Then I have your permission to take my horse?"

"Yes, yes; since, at all events, the walnuts are crushed, and the ass will do for the olives. God bless you, my son!"

Brother George retired, highly gratified. The good father, looking after him with clasped hands and compressed lips, raised his eyes to heaven.

CHAPTER IV.

" WELL, you have got the horse, but don't fancy that settles all ; it remains to be seen whether he can carry you: at present, it is but reckoning without the host."

So said Brother George, as he wended his way toward the stable. His step was slow, and his heart somewhat misgave him ; just as when a man is on the point of paying his score who has not for some time counted the contents of his purse—he sets to the task with a presentiment that they'll fall short.

In the first few months after his entry into the convent, he used every now and then to pay a visit to his steed, and always managed to scrape up something in order to compensate the scarcity as well as the quality of the miserable pittance supplied by the gardener. For an animal who had been accustomed to round his sides every day with oats and barley, something more was needed than the scanty feed of the convent ass and two lean cows, who were his companions in the labours abroad, as well as in the stable. In spite, however, of the care of his former master, after the first month, the bones of his haunches began to appear; soon you might have counted his ribs. His neck and back formed one continued straight line; the ears, too, no longer able to resist the law of gravity, drooped over his temples; his eye became spiritless and mournful; and poor Griffin (the name Fanfulla had given him in other days) gradually contracted the sober, sorry look, that air of settled melancholy and affliction, that distinguished the ass, his neighbour. The heart of the old Cavalier could not bear to see the sad change that gradually came over him, and therefore had abandoned him in despair. For more than a year he had never set foot in the stable: he now visited it prepared for the worst.

High above his companions, the cows and the ass, he soon saw the back of his unhappy Griffin. He looked just like one of those rare animals that are preserved in museums, or, to speak more correctly, their stuffed skins, propped up on four poles and stuffed with straw and rubbish. He put his hand on him, and was almost ready to turn round and run away as if he had seen a ghost. But yet, so long as there was a ray of hope, he was unwilling to abandon it. He therefore remained; and, after surveying his shoulders and feet, he found him not in so bad a plight after all. Having given him a good feed of oats and barley, he said, "We'll see each other again when your carcase is replenished;" and so for the present left him.

Meantime, he thought it as well to go and see after his arms, saying to himself, "Here, too, I fear me, matters will fare no better." He directed his steps to a chamber on the ground floor, a kind of lumber-room, in which he had left them when he first took the cowl. It was a room in the corner of the cloister, into which were thrown, in a confused heap, articles of old furniture and things belonging to the sacristy. There were steps, wood to season, pitchers, old mats, apples laid out to ripen, garlic and onions hung from the stanchions of the roof; and in the midst of this confused mass of rubbish he found, partly hanging on the wall, partly lying on the ground, all the different pieces that composed his armour, together with saddle, bridle, and other equipments for his horse. The parts formed of iron were covered with rust; the leather, all cracked, was overlaid with a velvet of green and blue mould. We say nothing of the spiders and the dust. He put them all together in the best manner he could, and carried them off to his cell. By the aid of a little oil and a piece of soft wood, he commenced furbishing them up, and wrought so vigorously that in half an hour he discovered that the rust had not so far damaged his arms as to render them unserviceable.

Returning to the stable, where his horse had by this time somewhat mended his miserable appearance, he loosed him from the manger and led him to a small threshing-floor between the house and the garden. Here he put on his bridle, and at a bound vaulted on his back without a saddle, and began to put him through his paces. The poor beast, finding himself as he had not been for some time past, with a belly-full, had recovered something of his ancient mettle, and went through his *manège* much better than his rider expected, who leaped to the ground well pleased with the result; and, with the encouraging reflection that putting him on good feed for some days would completely set him on his legs again, he returned to his cell.

In order not to lose time (for he felt his ardour increase every minute), he resolved to go at once to see where he could find employment. He trimmed his beard and combed his hair, brushed up his cloak, and, drawing his hood over his face, he soon found himself in the square of St. Mark, taking the direction of Il Rennaio de Serristori (after passing the bridge Alle Grazie), where Malatesta Baglioni resided, Captain-general of the Florentines.

The time that he will take in traversing the streets we may profitably employ, before entering on other matters, in placing before the reader the situation of Florence at that time, and in recapitulating the political events which had conduced to bring it about.

Ever since the commencement of the sixteenth century, Europe had been in a very unsettled condition. Three men appeared who were destined to draw the multitude after them: the one by the authority of his rank; the second by the force of his arms; and the third by that of his abilities. These men were Charles V., Francis I., and Martin

Luther, whose aim seemed to be to try which of them could most effectually turn the world upside down. The two former, who had become enemies when they ceased to be rivals in their pretensions for the imperial crown, continued, during the remainder of their lives, in a perpetual alternation of long and bloody wars, stained with fraud and cruelty, and of short intervals of peace, deceitfully mediated, and violated upon the most insignificant pretences.

The third, a poor Augustinian friar, armed with learning, with talents, and impenetrable boldness, rendered powerful by the discontent which the abuses of ecclesiastical jurisdiction had given rise to among the nations of Germany, kindled that conflagration which was to destroy Catholicism in one half of Europe.

Ambition, love of vain glory, and religious fanaticism, which were the ruling passions of these three men, became the pervading passions of all classes in the sixteenth century; at the commencement of which, society entered on a new path, which it was destined to pursue without ever looking back, till the close of the eighteenth. Kings, who till then had with difficulty conducted short and local wars by the aid of vassals, obliged to attend them to the field for a limited time, but never under complete control, now raised money by increasing the imposts, to pay soldiers, who never left their standards, but remained as a guard to the Prince, wherever and whenever he pleased.

It was then that the foundations were laid of that system of large standing armies and of ever-increasing taxes—a system that, having exceeded all reasonable bounds, gave birth in the last generation to the direst events.

Politics and diplomacy, which heretofore had been almost entirely confined within the limits of each nation, now, in order to keep pace with this new state of things, took a wider range, and conceived the design of establishing the balance of power in Europe, whereby the great powers of the Continent combined for the purpose of mutual support.

Religion, till now founded on authority, was undermined by the doctrine of private judgment, and the fabric of faith, reduced to ruins, was shattered into as many fragments as there were sects created by the Reformation. The various and opposite influences of this event, introducing themselves among rival princes, at one time aided, at another thwarted, their projects—rendering their contentions more complicated, and involving, more or less, all the minor states.

To recount the numerous vicissitudes and complications that resulted from this state of things is not needful for our story. It will suffice to glance rapidly at those which had an immediate influence on the destinies of the city of Florence.

After the treaty of Madrid, by which Francis I. recovered his liberty, it was soon seen that his misfortunes and the somewhat ungenerous treatment of Charles V. had extinguished in the French monarch that chivalrous honour which had so often impelled him to be confiding even to credulity, and generous even to imprudence. For not only did he find a pretext to justify his refusal to cede Burgundy according to his engagement, but he became the head of a league—called the Holy League—against Charles V., to which the principal states of Italy gave in their adherence as they began to conceive apprehensions from the unbounded power of the Emperor. Duke Sforza, Clement VII., and the Florentines combined together; the latter could not but aid in the designs of a Pope of the house of the Medici, who were at that time the masters of their city. But on the one hand, the Duke of Urbino, Captain of the army of the League, from the recollection of the injuries that he had suffered from that family,* did not acquiesce very readily. On the other, Francis, having solely in view to obtain the liberty of his sons, who had been left behind as hostages in Spain, made use of the efforts of the Italians to back his continual and urgent applications at the Court of Madrid, but allowed the whole weight of the war to devolve on them. His allies soon became aware of his doubtful sincerity, and their zeal growing cool, they thought each of their own private interests alone. The Pope, whom the Colonna family, in conjunction with Don Ugo di Moncada, Viceroy of

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* Leo X. had despoiled the house, della Rovere, of the dukedom of Urbino.

Naples, had attacked and compelled to take refuge in the Castle of St. Angelo, concluded a treaty, by which he was to be the first to withdraw from the League, and recal his troops from Lombardy. These events happened in 1526.

In the meantime, Charles V. was preparing large armaments against Italy. The soldiery who had come down into this country with George Frundsberg had united with Bourbon, and were advancing in the direction of Rome. The Pope, lured by a treaty entered into with the Viceroy, thought he might consider himself secure, and disbanded his army.

But the soldiers of Bourbon, without caring for the treaty or anything else, took Rome, and sacked it in the manner we have described in the second chapter. The Florentines, now looking on Clement VII. as utterly ruined, rose in rebellion, and after having driven out, almost in the very face of the army of the League, the Cardinal of Cortona, and Hyppolytus and Alexander Medici, entirely reconstituted the Government, and restored their republican institutions.

But the new state of things rested on very insecure foundations.

It was not to the interest of Charles V. that the Florentines, who had been so long firmly allied to France, should remain free. The pope was desirous, at all hazards, of seeing, before his death, his family established in the supreme dominion at Florence. And the Venetians, from that policy which was thought subtle and sagacious by the Italian States, till they saw it subsequently bring about the downfall of one state after another, desired, and were perhaps ready, covertly, to aid, the humiliation of the Florentines. Francis alone could, and ought to have defended them; but they soon perceived (and many soon became aware of it too) that the French knew very well how to draw others into trouble for their own interests, and then to leave them to get out of it as they best could.

The Emperor then, designing to march into Italy, and to re-organize it in conformity with his own views, before turning his attention to the affairs of Germany, was aware that he must have some Italian prince on his side. The pope, who had now for some time been making overtures for peace, was chosen by Charles for his ally, as he was desirous of making amends for the outrages that his soldiery had inflicted on the head of the church.

Whilst the terms of the general peace between Charles, Francis, and their several allies, were being leisurely discussed, Europe heard with surprise that the treaty of Barcelona had put an end to the differences between the pope and the Emperor. The latter, among other articles of the treaty, had undertaken to establish in Florence the dominion of the Medici.*

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* The treaty ran, "That the Emperor, for the tranquillity of Italy, and the general pacification of the whole of Christendom, should reinstate, in the same dignity as formerly, the illustrious

This unhappy city saw the cloud that hung over it become darker and darker. And when the King of France, too, had a short time after ratified the peace of Cambray, abandoning, to his eternal infamy, all his allies,* the inhabitants of Florence were made aware that they must now place their hopes of deliverance only in God, in the justice of their cause, and in themselves.

But, in order to give full effect to their resources, they ought to have been united amongst themselves; instead of which, the parties who were severally called the Piagnoni and the Palleschi,† irreconcileable by ancient animosities and recent injuries, distracted and divided the state.

Those among the citizens who had risen in rank, and had enriched themselves under the protecting shadow of the house of the Medici,—men, for the most part, who were addicted to a life of enjoyment, fond of pleasure, and the parade of courts,—as well as many among the populace and the operatives, whom the large expenditure of that family enriched with considerable gains, had witnessed their expulsion with regret, and were ready to seize on any occasion to bring them back.

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house of the Medici, in the dominion of Florence, the expenses of the war being shared in such proportion as should be agreed on between him and the Pope."—VARCHI. HIST. LIB. VIII.

* It was known that the king's mother had said that, to recover even one of her grandsons, let alone both, she would have given a thousand Florences.—VARCHI. LIB. IX.

† They were also called the Arrabiati and Compagnacci—"the madmen," and "evil companions."

This party, taking their name from the Medicean device (six red balls, or *pallæ*, on a yellow ground) was called the Palleschi. These people were indifferent to liberty, and preferred to it the merry life and the freedom of manners, which they enjoyed under the sway of the Medici.

Their opponents, disciples so to speak of the friar Girolamo Savonarola, and followers of his rigid discipline, professed the most self-denying austerity of life, a horror for even lawful pastimes and diversions, and were abettors of democracy in its extremest sense. The habit of having ever in their mouths moral maxims, and ascetic precepts, and of constantly deploring the licentiousness of the world, was the reason of their being called the Piagnoni (or the mourners). Whether this zeal for religion and liberty were sincere in all who professed it, or whether it was assumed by many to mask their ambitious and violent designs, we shall not undertake to decide, since the chiefs of parties in all ages have inscribed on their banner: "We are for religion, for liberty, and for justice to all!" and so have not wanted for followers; whereas, to have inscribed on their banner what was generally the truth: "We are for religion that serves us, for liberty for ourselves alone, and justice after our own fashion," would have gained them but few. And however obvious such a reflection may appear, a great part of the miseries of the world has arisen from not having attended to it.

The opposition between these two parties was, however, anything but open. The Piagnoni were masters of the city, and the Palleschi had a hard matter to manage to reside there at all, though concealing their political principles by every device; and it was only by dint of hypocrisy that they could escape fines and the rack for every slight cause of suspicion, and being consigned to the gaol or to the gallows. But owing to this species of persecution, as their hatred increased against their enemies, they made up by cunning what they wanted in power; and secret negotiations for the return of the Medici were constantly maintained, which ended at last in the ruin of the republic.

Besides these two opposing parties, as is always the case in times of revolution, there was a third, called the "neutrals," who entertained more moderate designs. Although this party too wished to remain free, yet they were disposed to enter into arrangements with the pope, and see whether, by admitting the Medici to return as private citizens, war might not be avoided, and at the same time the state be preserved in its integrity. Of this sect, which also went by the name of the "optimates," because many of the richer, and therefore more timorous, attached themselves to it, the chief was Niccolo Capponi. This party was, as we shall see, eventually the cause of the loss of their liberty.

Meantime, the news spread through all Italy that Charles V. had landed at Genoa with a vast armament; and if all were alarmed at the tidings, the Florentines had more reason to be so than any others. But, resuming their courage by degrees, owing to the stirring exhortations of the gonfalonier Carducci, and several others of the Piagnoni, (of whom the chief were, Niccolo Guicciardini, John Battista Cei, Bernardo da Castiglione, Jacob Gherardi, and Louis Soderini), they resolved to make the best preparations they could, and to submit to death rather than to the loss of their liberty. The neutral party succeeded, however, in carrying a resolution to send ambassadors to the emperor. For this purpose, Thomas Soderini, Matthew Strozzo, Raphael Girolami, and Niccolo Capponi, were chosen, who speedily made their way to Genoa. The reply of the emperor, although conveyed in the most gracious manner, was brief and peremptory, since he was resolved on endeavouring to gratify the wishes of Clement VII. on all points. His words were: "that due honour should be rendered to the pope." Their meaning: "That Florence must become the seignory of the house of the Medici." The grand chancellor, subsequently, adopted towards the deputies a tone and manner of greater austerity. He brought forward the usual pretensions, viz. that Florence was a fief of the empire, and the Florentines, by entering into a league with Francis, had lost their rights, their privileges, and their liberty; that it was indeed great humanity on the part of the emperor, that he should consent to overlook their perfidy and ingratitude on the sole condition of their reinstating the Medici. The ambassadors replied in half a dozen words,—"That Florence had ever been free and independent;" and the negotiations being thus broken off, they departed.

The extinction of their last hopes for averting the war, instead of crushing the minds of the Florentines, had an opposite effect. With an ardour and an enthusiasm, of which history furnishes few such examples, and which deserved a better fate, they resolved to defend themselves to the last extremity, indifferent alike to the treachery of France, the indignation of Clement, and the tremendous rashness of venturing to oppose, single-handed, the whole power of Charles V.

It is a sight that wrings the heart, to see such a multitude of citizens, with their wives, and even their children, all resolve with such ardour to defy fortune, and confront, with such intrepidity and enthusiasm, the risks of so unequal a contest; to undergo hardships, hunger, wounds, and death itself, rather than submit to injustice; and then to think what a fate so much virtue and so much courage was destined to experience! We cannot resist the inclination we feel, to inform the reader of the methods they adopted in order to carry out their noble design, and we are sure that he will not be displeased with us for so doing.

CHAPTER V.

First of all, in conformity with a resolution carried to that effect, the image of the Virgin Mary dell'Impruneta, and the picture of Santa Maria Primerana di Fesolé, were devoutly brought into Florence, and deposited in Santa Maria del Fiore, in the chapel of San Zenobi. They next appointed several new captains, especially from among those belonging to the "*black bands*,"* and increased the battalions; so that upon holding a general review, there were found in Florence alone, without reckoning the country around it, more than 80,000 regular troops, under the command of six colonels, and about eighty captains, of whom seventeen were natives of Florence. Besides, the four quarters into which Florence was divided, viz. San Spirito, Santa Croce, Saint John, and Santa Maria Novella, had each four gonfalons, under which all the youths of the city were enrolled; in all, making up sixteen companies of about four hundred each; of these, every one elected their captain by their own votes, their lieutenant, their ensign, their sergeant and corporals. These bands, armed with pikes, corslets and arquebusses, well drilled, and their appointments of the best possible kind, were composed of men, whose ages ranged from seventeen to forty. They were bound to muster once a month, each company on the Grande Place in its own quarter, where they went through their drill, and practised target-shooting, and by the training they thus received in all the duties of a soldier, they were soon able to match with the regular troops.

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* They were the bands who had been commanded by John de Medici; and who, dressing in a dark uniform after his death, by way of mourning, were called the Black Bands.

Besides, too, a practice had been established that, every year four of these youths should each deliver an oration in one of the principal churches in favour of liberty.* This practice was destined to have but a short duration. In addition to these, who were all infantry troops, Amico d'Arsoli and Jacob Bichi, of Siena, were in the service of the Republic with their horse-soldiers, who, in all, did not amount to four hundred.

The command of the regular troops was designed for Don Hercules d'Este, the Duke of Ferrara's eldest son, as Captain-general of the Florentines. The ten Commissioners of Peace and War sent him notice to get ready to set out, and he received at the same time 3,500 ducats, which they were bound to furnish him in his capacity as General, to provide himself with a thousand infantry as a body guard.

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* Segni. Hist. lib. ii.

But the Duke Alfonso, notwithstanding his promise, being either afraid of the Pope, or fearing the hostility of the Emperor, feigned excuses, and refused either to send his son or to restore the money. Owing to this treacherous conduct, the Florentines were necessitated to entrust the supreme command to Malatesta Baglioni, son of John Paolo, a soldier of the Republic. They sent to him, at Perugia, Bernardo da Verazzano as their Ambassador, who was charged to treat him with the utmost distinction, with a view of securing his fidelity to their cause, and to prevent his being tampered with by the Pope, who seemed to be constantly aiming at that object. Malatesta accepted the command; unluckily for the Florentines.

It is natural to ask, why they confided so much power to a man, of whom, for many reasons, they ought to have entertained the gravest apprehensions? In the first place, the emergency was pressing, and it was not easy, all at once, to find another, who, in military matters, was so capable as Malatesta. Next, the regulations of the service were at that period so variable, and discipline so lax, that the different chiefs of the bands, who composed the army, would never have submitted to an equal, raised by his merits to the chief command, and hardly liked to act in subordination to one, who might be considered as an independent prince.

That money might not be wanting to pay these troops, sixteen officers were selected to preside over the Exchequer; who were charged to raise for the service of the State 80,000 florins, the interest of which was fixed at twelve per cent. A board was formed, consisting of four citizens, whose duty it was to levy a contribution; and at the same time it was decreed, that all outstanding imposts should be paid up. All the goods of each of the twenty-one crafts were sold by auction, and those of the fraternities and societies, as well of the city, as of the surrounding country. Clement VII., by a Brief, had granted leave for these ecclesiastical possessions to be sold, when Florence was still under the sway of the Medici, in order that the money derived from them, might be used for the purpose of keeping them in possession of the supreme power. But as no use had been made at that time of this concession, it was now turned to account for the defence of their liberty.

Previous to the year 1526, the walls had been defended with numerous towers, which the Medici had ordered to be razed, by the advice of Pietro Navarro. But at this juncture, Michaelangelo Buonarotti, who had shown, indeed, some degree of timidity by removing from Florence, when danger threatened it, but had afterwards come to himself, and returned to discharge the duty of a good citizen, exerted himself to strengthen the walls in every part. He enclosed within their compass, the hill that is situated between the gate of San Niccolo and San Miniato, surrounding it with a bastion, and putting in a state of defence the convent, the church, and the belfry-tower of San Miniato. He constructed many other bastions, where he thought they were needed, with their flanks, fosses, and port-holes, according to the principles of the art in those days. The external coating of these bastions was of unbaked brick, formed of calcined earth, mixed with oakum ; the internal was of earth and faggots closely pressed and rammed together.

In the council of the Eighty, a resolution had been passed, " that the outlying districts of the city should all be immediately reduced to ruins, and all edifices within a mile, whether great or small, sacred or profane, which could either be of service to the enemy without, or be used for the annoyance of those within the city, should be levelled to the ground, &c." The owners, however, had their names inscribed in a book, as creditors of the State, for the amount at which their property was assessed.

These burghs, or outlying districts, were at that time, almost so many cities themselves. The surrounding country was everywhere covered with houses, villas, and palaces, with gardens and orchards, richer and more beautifully ornamented than any place in the world. It is not possible to imagine the loss caused to public as well as private interests by this devastation; in which many families had property sacrificed to an amount of more than 20,000 florins. But the citizens, regarding neither their money, nor their possessions, received the decree with alacrity; and going forth in a body, young men and old, rich and poor, nay, the proprietors themselves, they proceeded to this villa and that, and not only levelled the dwelling-houses, but wasted and destroyed kitchen-gardens and flower-gardens, fountains and reservoirs; and cutting down alike fruit-trees and ornamental shrubs, uprooting vines, olives, cedars, and orange-trees, they returned to Florence with mules and asses laden with faggots, which were afterwards used in raising the height of the bastions. The buildings of more solid construction were reduced to ruins, by means of an instrument made in the form of a battering-ram. It consisted of a beam placed horizontally, and counterpoised by ropes, which was set in motion, and driven with tremendous force by a great number of men, who, battering the walls with it with all their might, (stimulating one another all the while with shouts and vociferations), soon brought to the ground vast masses of stonework. This instrument was called a Battitoio.

In the midst of this general destruction, a circumstance transpired which showed in what esteem the arts were held by the men of that age. A crowd of citizens, soldiers, and countrymen had thrown down, with one of those machines, a good part of the church and convent of San Salvi. Having proceeded in their work of destruction till they arrived at the refectory, in which was a painting of the Last Supper, the work of Andrea del Sarto, all at once, they stopped in their career of devastation, as if their arms had fallen off; and no one having the heart to lay his hand on that wonderful performance, they left that fragment of the wall standing, and the picture remained unhurt.

The palace of Jacob Salviati, and the villa of Careggi belonging to the Medici, were burnt down by a company of young men, directed by Dante and Lorenzo Castiglione, who were among the most inveterate enemies of that family. But these conflagrations, not promoting the interests of the State, and serving only to gratify private animosities, were severely censured by the better sort; and the gonfalonier Carduccio gave orders for the authors of them to be punished. But the present crisis not admitting of any great degree of severity against such acts of wantonness, the orders were not put into execution.

The Prince of Orange, Viceroy of Naples, had, in the meantime, received orders from the emperor to collect his troops, and advance against the city of Florence, whenever desired by the pope. The viceroy arrived at Rome the last day of July, with a hundred horsemen and a thousand arquebussiers; and took up his quarters outside the walls, in the Salviati palace. When admitted to an audience with His Holiness, there was much ado before they could come to an understanding. The pope, who was by nature parsimonious and cautious, was indisposed to spend largely, and to advance the required subsidies; while the viceroy, a prince of a haughty disposition, could not endure the idea of entering on so important an undertaking with such scanty resources. They at last agreed on the sums to be furnished by the Apostolic Chamber, and the prince joined the army at Aquila, where it had remained under the command of John d' Urbino; from thence advancing with it towards Fuligno, where the general muster was appointed to be made.

During all this time Rome was in a state of bustle and excitement, arising from the preparations for the war, and was rapidly filling with soldiery. Spaniards, Germans, and Italians, soldiers of fortune, were enlisting by troops, attracted by the hope of sacking Florence. They looked on the event as so certain, (and we continue to laud the good old times!) that there were some, who, being cited in an action before the courts of justice, and apprehending that this delay would prevent their getting there in time, brought forward, as a counter-charge against their opponents, the loss and damage that threatened them by their not being at the sack of Florence.

The pope, feeling offended at the Republic's having sent ambassadors to the emperor, and not to himself, appeared so bent on taking vengeance, that there was no one who would venture to try and appease him. Two citizens only of Florence, Jacob Salviati and Roberto Pucci, fearlessly told him the truth; bidding him reflect upon the great danger to which he was exposing his native country, and the infamy that he was calling down upon himself. But Clement had persuaded himself that the Florentines would probably give in, before they were reduced to extremities; so that he was not in the least diverted from his resolution.

Under the directions of the Prince of Orange, the army was soon concentrated in the plains around Fuligno to the number of 35,000 infantry, and about 1,200 cavalry. Amongst these latter were the Germans, who came into Italy under the command of George Frundsberg, or, to speak more correctly, those who had survived the war and the pestilence at Rome, and the famine at Naples, veteran soldiers, and men of undaunted courage. The first princes and generals of Italy commanded in this army. Among the principal chiefs were to be reckoned Don Ferrante Gonzaga, brother of the Marquis of Mantua, Peter Louis Farnese, Giovanni Battista Savello, Marzio, Piero and Sciarra Colonna, Count Piero Maria Rossi di San Secondo di Parma, Alessandro Vitelli of Castello, Braccio and Sforza Baglioni. To these were added at a later period the Marquis del Vasto, Monsignor Ascalino Astigiano, and Giovanni da Sassatello, who, after he had received the pay of the Florentines, thought it no disgrace, without restoring the money he had taken, to march his 3,000 men to the camp of the enemy.

Fabrizio Maramaldo, a Sardinian, without either being hired or invited to the service of the emperor, plundered and taxed the territories of Siena and Volterra with three thousand, brigands rather than soldiers.—Such were the methods in which war was waged in those times!

Perugia, Cortona, Arezzo, soon fell into the hands of the imperial troops, which descended by the Val d'Arno, without meeting any great opposition, towards Florence.

The advance of the enemy began to inspire some degree of terror into the hearts of many of the citizens, and the party of the "moderates" succeeded in persuading the State to send a deputation to the pope. They accomplished their journey to Rome with considerable difficulty, as the roads were cut up, the passes intercepted, and the country overrun with banditti. The reply of Clement was, "that as it was a matter in which his honour was concerned, he proposed that the Florentines should unreservedly cast themselves on his mercy, and he would then show to all the world that he, too, was a Florentine, and was sincerely devoted to his country."

As soon as the result of this mission was known in Florence, the minds of all, laying aside all thoughts of compromise, turned their attention to increasing the fortifications and strengthening the defences. The construction of the walls, which were now far advanced, was prosecuted with the utmost alacrity, especially those about the bastion of San Miniato; and the gonfalonier in person encouraged them with unceasing diligence. When the sun had set, the work was continued all night by torch-light. With the labourers and pioneers were associated young men, women, old men, and even children, all exerting themselves, as far as their strength permitted, in carrying earth, fascines, and stones, vying with one another in the meanest and most toilsome labours, with that eager alacrity which is kindled by the approach of more than ordinary dangers, in those who know how to encounter them for the maintenance of their just rights. In fine, the fortifications might be considered impregnable in those times.

As the danger approached, the party of the Piagnoni became more inveterate against the Palleschi. Many of the latter, of the first families in Florence, had decamped, scared away by the dangers of the siege, or by the persecutions of their adversaries, who accused them to the magistrates, insulted them in the squares and in the streets, and had often attempted to ill-treat them. Dante da Castiglione, a bold and impetuous young man, Sorrignone, Cardinal Rucellai, Pietro Poldo dei Pazzi, Domenico Boni, and others of the party hostile to the Medici, had filled the city with these outrageous scenes; and whilst affirming that they were contending for liberty, were the first to destroy it. The wiser sort, who well knew how contrary such conduct was to a life of real freedom, tolerated it, that they might not appear lukewarm; and so were hurried along by the more rash and precipitate to consent to violent and extreme measures.

At this juncture, in order to prevent others from quitting the city, and to induce those who had, to return; all who were without the walls were summoned, by a public proclamation, to present themselves before the magistrates within a limited time. Those who failed in obedience to this order, were outlawed as rebels, and their goods confiscated. Some, therefore, returned.

With respect to Baccio Valori, the pope's commissary in the camp of the Prince of Orange, there was, further, a price set upon his head, as a traitor to his country; a thousand florins were offered to him who should bring him alive, and if dead, five hundred. Besides this, in conformity with an old law against traitors, the list of his family, his genealogical tree, was defaced and torn from top to bottom.

The pope, meantime, was continually receiving tidings from the camp. Upon hearing that the whole country round Florence was being wasted with fire, given over to pillage and to every element of destruction, he perhaps felt some compunction; but, still adhering to his opinion that the Florentines would, in all probability, be more easy to treat with, now that the army was seen in the heart of their country, he resolved, before it was entirely reduced to a desert, to send the archbishop of Capua into Tuscany. He directed him to pass through Florence, the gates of which were still open, under pretext of going to visit the

Prince of Orange, and see for himself whether there was a possibility, without driving matters to extremity, that the Florentines would submit. The archbishop arrived, and took up his quarters with Agnolo della Casa; but soon a report spread abroad among the people that he had come to bribe the chiefs of the state. Four citizens were sent by the governing body to ascertain the motives of his visit. He replied, that on his way to the camp he was passing through Florence for his own convenience. At the same time, he offered his mediation between the Florentines and His Holiness. This offer was not accepted as Clement had imagined it would have been; and the archbishop was escorted out of the gate of San Niccolo, as far as the nearest outposts of the enemy.

The suspicions against the Palleschi were rather increased than otherwise by the visit of the archbishop, both in the Government, and among the people; and, in consequence, six persons were appointed, who, in conjunction with the gonfalonier, were to point out those among the citizens whom they regarded as partisans of the Medici, or who were suspected of designs upon the liberty of the State. In virtue of this decree many were arrested and placed in confinement, where they remained strictly guarded almost up to the end of the siege.

All the Spaniards who were in Florence, engaged in commerce, were shut up in a private house, a person being appointed to guard them; and who, whilst he liberally supplied their wants, was not to suffer them to confer together, nor write anything but what had reference to their private affairs. To these acts of severity, which the troubles of the State might excuse, were added others more cruel and inexcusable. Carlo Cocchi had his head cut off for no other reason but for having ventured to say, "that Florence belonged to the Medici, and that therefore they ought to receive them as their masters, without having recourse to a war." Others, on the mere suspicion of intriguing with the pope, were subjected to the rack; and it is only too probable that in these cases many became victims, who were either innocent, or deserving of a less degree of punishment; since too often it happens, that one act of injustice produces a hundred. But this unjust and violent treatment that was adopted by both parties, whenever they gained the upper hand,—conduct which they foolishly imagined to be the best means for maintaining their ascendancy,—was rather the true cause why neither of them could ever firmly establish themselves in their position, till the fate of Florence was irrevocably fixed by foreign intervention.

The army at length arrived before the walls, and on the 14th of October, encamped in the plain of Ripoli, by the monastery del Paradiso. It is recorded that when the Spanish soldiers arrived at Apparita, the city of Florence all on a sudden opening before them, they shouted with inexpressible delight, brandishing their spears, "Señora

Florencia, get your brocades ready, as we are coming to buy them, by spear-measure."

On the 17th, they commenced forming an intrenchment at Giramonte; on the 24th the prince established his camp on the hills that rise up on the south of Florence, from the gate of San Niccolo to that of San Friano; and the morning after, Malatesta Baglioni, by order of the Ten Commissioners of peace and liberty, presented himself at sunrise on the bastions of San Miniato, attended by the captains and officers of the army, and followed by all the bands of music in the city; and after they had sounded a long blast on the trumpet, with continual beating of drums, they discharged all the pieces of artillery, great and small, of which there was a vast number, as if to salute the enemy, or to defy him to mortal combat. The reverberations of the roaring cannon shook the city and the walls, and was re-echoed by the hills and valleys of Fesolé. The bastions were for some minutes hidden in the smoke, and the Florentines learnt that the dreaded siege was at last commenced. This demonstration, that was made according to the usages of war in those days, did not, however, produce any effect.

On the following days the first operations of the besiegers were directed against the belfry-tower of San Miniato, on which was posted a famous bombardier, called Giovanni d'Antonio, and nicknamed Lupo; who, with two small pieces of ordnance, did the enemy considerable injury. The prince directed four large guns to be posted on the bastion of Giramonte, which continued its fire for three successive days against the tower. These guns were discharged twice in an hour, and by the artillerymen of the sixteenth century, this was thought rapid firing. The cannon balls went sometimes to the right, sometimes to the left, now low, now high; and if now and then they struck the tower, they did it little harm, owing to the distance; and on account of its great solidity, they did little more than graze the stone. Nevertheless, those within the city, that (as Varchi expresses it) they who had come with such arrogance, to take all Florence, might not take so much as one of its towers, protected it with great bales of wool, on the side that was exposed to the enemy's guns. This position was strongly contested, each party vying with the other in its attack or defence; so that one night the Florentines raised a huge bulwark of earth against the tower, whereby the Imperialists were diverted from further assaults upon it. Instead of this, they brought into position a culverin, the fire of which they directed on the palace of the magistrates. But in the act of discharging, the gun split in two, and the ball lighted on the house of the city hangman.

During the early part of November they engaged in several slight skirmishes, which produced no important results. The youth of the city sallied out every day in bands to try their strength with the enemy, against whom they had conceived a fresh feeling of hostility, from a cause which gives a lively idea of the manners of those times.

The use of arms was considered at that time as a profession, which no one had a right to assume, who was not registered as a soldier, and enrolled according to the rules of war. Such looked upon themselves as members of the same fraternity, with whom, though enemies, it was mutually understood, that the laws and rules of regular warfare were to be observed on both sides; the consequence of this practice was, that the imperial soldiers, men for the most part who had grown old in service, and matriculated, so to speak, in the art they professed,—looked down with scorn on the Florentines, who usurped (as they called it) the right of handling arms in the defence of their country; nor would they ever observe towards them the usual formalities they practised in cases, where the regular soldiers were concerned, saying, the Florentine militia were not soldiers at all, but gentlemen.

Among the absurdities of human arrogance, this will not be considered as the least extraordinary. The young men resented this offensive distinction, and went so far as to stain their bravery with many acts of wanton barbarity. Amongst others, Vincenzo Aldobrandini, and Morticino degli Antinori, having captured two Spaniards, instead of setting them to ransom, cut off their heads.

Such was the position of affairs in Florence, when brother George sallying forth from the convent of St. Mark, directed his steps to the hotel of Malatesta Baglioni.

CHAPTER VI.

The city of Florence was well prepared for defence. The walls were strong, the soldiery numerous and well appointed, the treasury well furnished, provisions abundant, and the minds of all inflamed with the love of their country, and full of daring; but it cherished a viper in its bosom, and that viper was Malatesta Baglioni.

This man's ancestors had been chiefs of the nobles and Ghibellines of Perugia, where John Paolo, his father, had become the head of the State toward the end of the fifteenth century; and although he had been twice driven out, once by Cæsar Borgia, and a second time by Julius II., yet he had succeeded in re-establishing himself there again. He met his end in the following way. Leo X. wished to reunite Perugia to the States of the Church, and having inveigled him with large promises, and an assurance of a safe pass, he induced him to come to Rome, where instead of the reception he was led to expect, he was taken prisoner, placed on the rack, and then beheaded. The hatred universally entertained towards him for his crimes, was the reason why the public voice absolved Leo from the charge of treachery.

The first years of Malatesta's life were passed pretty much as his father's had been; originally a captain in the service of the Venetians, afterwards lord of Perugia, and last of all, as we have seen, captain of the Florentine troops. A man of a cold unfeeling mind, sagacious and astute; of unwearied tenacity of purpose, haughty and avaricious; persevering and dogged in his revenge; and above all other qualifications, he was a master of artifice, and of the art of concealing and colouring it, even after it had effected its object; personally bold and fearless, and a very skilful commander. In a word, he was the type of those petty tyrants, who, for several ages, rose and fell, and then reappeared again on the scene, in almost all the Italian cities. At one time princes, at another commanders in the service of other princes, or of republics more powerful than princes; often acting as chiefs of parties, of outlaws or of bandits; men who had experienced every variety of fortune; and in all, showed themselves equally brave, restless, and insatiable; men who, reared in the midst of domestic vices and civic quarrels, after having lived in a continual alternation of violence and fraud, generally terminated their career by being overwhelmed or betrayed by powerful and open foes, or else fell beneath the knife of the assassin, and sometimes even of their nearest connexions. So that in that age, more than in any other, the lines of Juvenal seemed to be verified—

> Ad generum Cereris sine cæde et vulnere pauci
> Descendunt reges et siccâ morte tyranni.

It will not be thought probable, that in such men there could be any sentiments of religious faith or feeling. And yet, in their way, they had both. So true is it that Diogenes, in defining man to be an unfledged biped, ought to have added the epithet "inconsistent" to it. They built churches, they maintained monks, they enriched sanctuaries; they believed in God, in the Gospel, and in the Pope; and, still with the same species of logic, in witches, in alchemy, and in astrology.

Malatesta, too, yielded a blind faith to a Jewish astrologer called Master Barlaam,* a native of Hungary, who, to the art of divination, united an extensive acquaintance with medicine, and much experience in the practice of it. He lived, on the most confidential footing, in the house of Baglioni; followed him in all his enterprises, and continued to enrich himself from his master's money. It cannot indeed be said, that all his riches were equally the fruits of malversation, for he justly earned a part of them, in return for the continual attendance, which was exacted by the heavy afflictions and infirmities of his master, who was slowly wasting away under diseases, for which that age had discovered no remedies. He had received from Nature a robust constitution, by which he had been enabled to sustain the fatigues and hardships of war; until the consequences of his dissipation had destroyed his health and strength. In early youth he was broad-shouldered and broad-chested, of a fresh countenance, and light olive complexion, with black hair and beard, short and curly. In a word, he was the very personification of vigour. To what state disease and sickness had now reduced him, we shall see by-and-by.

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* *Master* was at that time the style and title of physicians.—Trans.

The Serristori palace where he lodged was, as it is at present, (though entirely changed) at the bottom of the square, near to the bridge Alle Grazie. The back looked on the mill-stream and on the Arno.

The very morning, on which our story opens, an hour before daybreak, all was still throughout the palace, the great gate closed, and the postern alone half-open, at which was stationed a soldier on guard; his arms, his head, and the upper part of his body encased in iron; he wore the huge breeches of the fifteenth century, with red and black stripes, and striped hose of the same colour. The weapon, with which he was furnished, was a long halberd; and he paced up and down impatiently beneath the entrance-passage, stamping with his feet in order to keep himself warm.

The men who formed the guard, wrapped in their cloaks, were snoring in a corner, where they lay at full length on the straw, near a heap of cinders and ashes, the remains of the fire which they had made during the night.

On the first floor all were still asleep. Malatesta alone had been awake for some time. He was sitting on a couch of a rectangular form, made of stained wood, highly finished with inlaid work; the faces divided into compartments, and on each of them was represented a story from the ancient mythology in basso-relievo. The frames which bordered these representations, presented a curious and complicated wreath of leaves, of figures of animals, of strange visages, and of every kind of arabesque. The couch rose upon a basement about a span from the floor.

By the side of the bed, on a little round table supported by a figure of Atlas, bending down, a silver lamp was burning; near to it were thrown, in one disordered heap, a very beautiful poniard with its strings and tassels to fasten it, rings and collars, a shrine, and a jewel of so strange a form, that it was difficult to divine its use. It was a round and flat stone like a coin, of a ruby colour, tied to a small steel chain. By a point, which was likewise of steel, inserted in the ligature, it was held suspended by the attracting power of a magnetised needle, which was fixed in the upper part of a circle, within which the gem remained poised. The circle itself was fixed on a little pedestal of ebony; and the whole was inscribed with letters and cabalistic signs.

The room was hung with red leather, ornamented with arabesque work in gold; arm-chairs all round, also of leather, bedizened with bosses and fringes. Two large mastiffs were snoring, crouched down in a corner.

The aspect of Malatesta was that of one, who had been disinterred from the tomb. His eyes and cheeks were hollow; his skin was of a leaden, livid colour; his beard and hair, once so bushy, now so thin and decayed, that at the slightest touch they fell off. He had on, over his shirt, a doublet of rose-coloured cloth, which was open in front, and displayed a breast so lean and attenuated, that you could count the ribs. They were covered only by the skin, and between each pair was a deep hollow, like so many furrows. Thick and corrupt humours, gathering at his joints, had there coagulated and hardened, so that his movements were not at all free, and his arms had the appearance of being paralysed.

He was slowly sipping a large glass of a decoction, which he had taken from the table, that stood by, and was looking with a sardonic smile at a person who seemed to be a friar, that sat opposite to him, about two paces from the bed.

This man was clad in the habit of St. Francis. His cowl hid his face and eyes in such a way, that nothing was visible but the tip of his nose, and two cheeks, that looked plump and ruddy. His beard, which was white and of an enormous size, covered his mouth and chin, and reached as low down as his girdle.

He held his head down, with one hand applied to his chin, and his bosom heaving with deep-drawn sighs; he was apparently absorbed in thoughts, that fiercely agitated him.

He muttered in an under tone: "'Twould be too vile a deed!—impossible!—I can't hear of it.—"

And he continued to keep his eyes on the ground; indeed, had he raised them and seen the countenance of Malatesta, and that diabolical smile, I fancy, he would have fled away with the utmost precipitation. Well would it have been for him, if he had done so!

At last, Baglioni said, with a scornful air, and yet at the same time, without any sign of emotion:

"Say no more on't;—there will not be wanting to the Medici, those who will be ready to do them this slight service, without so many enticements, and so much coaxing. You know, eh? there are children of ten, of twenty—of fifty—eh, even of seventy?—Signor Baccio Valori, who counts so on you, it seems is mistaken though. Go, go, there will not be wanting those, who will catch the ball at the rebound, if you won't. And when the device of the six balls shall adorn the palace gate, there will be some one, who will be carousing merrily in the hotel of the Medici, and a glorious time he'll have of it; he'll be transported to the third heaven; he will want neither horses (Malatesta pronounced each of these words by itself, and spoke them slowly, and with emphasis) nor dogs—nor dresses—nor gold,—nor balls—nor plays,—and if any one should annoy him, he will be able to have his will of him:—this you will see, and say; '*Where that man is, I might have been.*' A mighty gratifying sight, I can tell you!"

The friar fetched his breath heavily, his bosom rose and fell with his internal emotion, but he spoke not.

"True it is," continued Malatesta, "that it will be better for you not to see all this, but that you put some little distance betwixt you and Florence. It would not suit the Medici, that a man who has known so much of their affairs, and has not been willing to serve them, should ever know the taste of bread again."

At this moment the tower clock of the palace struck five.

"In an hour, it will be day. Go, in God's name. But remember, if the devil should ever tempt you to entangle yourself any more in state affairs, that it is best to show yourself a man, and not a child in such undertakings. And ever remember, that this (touching his tongue with his fore-finger) sometimes causes the head to fall—and if anything of what has been said between us, should leak out—these two mastiffs, I shall know, cannot have divulged it, so that I shall guess who I have to settle with—"

"Such treachery as that!" said the friar, speaking to himself.

"Treachery!" repeated Malatesta twice, with his accustomed grin; "oh, to be sure, you had better go at once to the magistrates and say to them: *You must know that we design to get possession of the government, and to hand it over to the Medici; so look out.* Certainly, you are a daft fellow!"

" But that unhappy old man—his daughter—his family!—"

" Oh, indeed! are they kinsmen of the noble Bardi, of the Strozzi, the Frescobaldi?—They must be some grand family surely, that such mighty respect must be paid them. Do you think such sentiments are becoming a man of your rank? When such mighty interests are at stake, that princes and lords are venturing their lives for them, are you bargaining about a beggarly weaver of silk, as if he were one of the royal blood of France?"

The friar rose up all on a sudden, just as if he had been impelled by a spring. He approached the couch, took Malatesta's hand, pressed it tightly, and exclaimed in a vehement tone:

" I'll do all:—Cursed be the hour in which I was born into the world!"

Malatesta laughed at his excitement; and withdrawing his hand, with something of scorn in his manner, he replied,

" Oh! oh! you have changed your mind—eh? Your scruples have vanished? How many minutes will this resolution last?"

" Too long will it last—to my misfortune. And if I shall break my neck in this enterprise, I shall well deserve it."

" Now listen to me," said Malatesta, changing all at once his tone and manner. " As for that matter, he who will venture nothing, must remain satisfied to jog along in a child's go-cart. But he, who aspires to be a man, fit for something, and not meanly to spend his life in winding wool, or in shearing cloth, must boldly commit himself to fortune. Think you that the Medici will make you great and rich, because when it was the time to act you were idly scratching your head? The choice rests with yourself. Well do you know, that this house has ever rewarded services, as the dignity of such a house required, and no less signal has been its vengeance. And if their ancestors had not had a different spirit to yours, the emblem of the Balls would now surmount the door of a warehouse, and not the gates of fortresses and palaces. The world is his, who takes it; and not his, who entangles himself with all these fears and scruples."

"Well! well! it shall be done—if the opportunity shall present itself;—since, at present, I don't see my way clearly."

"Oh! fancy, whether Niccolo will not be glad to see his Lisa married to one of your rank."

"Niccolo? But do you know, what sort of man Niccolo is? He would twist her neck with his own hands, sooner than give her to any but a man of the popular party. To me too?—to one of the Palleschi? It's pretty clear, that your highness don't know him. If Niccolo had any idea how matters stand, God knows what the consequence would be—but I should like to see anybody bold enough to tell him of it!"

"I understand you," said Malatesta; "we must think on't; but now get you gone quickly; I would not it were day when you return through the streets. Tell Baccio that I send my respects to him."

The friar, having opened a little door that was concealed beneath a tapestry hanging, disappeared.

" This, too, is all right," said Malatesta, when he found himself alone, rubbing his hands, as he was accustomed to do when pleased. But the action of doing so caused him certain piercing and acute pains, that compelled him to desist; an exclamation of pain escaped from him; he bit his under lip, and cursed his maladies.

He then called, with a loud voice, twice, " Barlaam ! "

There appeared, in answer to this summons, a little shrivelled old man, with a visage so full of wrinkles, that it appeared as if made up of skeins of thread; his nose was thin and aquiline; his two small, peering eyes were like grains of pepper, with a mouth always displaying a smile, but one that, not being accompanied with any signs of joy in the rest of his countenance, appeared rather a convulsive distension of the lips.

" I vow," said Malatesta, " that one-half of the cursed guaiacum that you have made me swallow within this past month, would suffice to burn thee alive, and God knows whether I should be the worse for it."

" Your Highness," replied the old man, without the least emotion, " would, in that case, have one faithful servant the less."

"But dost thou not know, thou enemy of God, that I have not had an hour's respite the whole night? That I feel as if the marrow of my bones were being pricked with needles? Is it so hard to find a herb, a powder, a devil, that may help me to sleep for an hour? In God's name, I'll not be ever paying guerdons to a scoundrel who torments me."

"This summer I'll get the chelidony—a stone that grows in the swallow's pouch; and your Highness shall wrap this stone in a piece of cloth, and shall sew it to your shirt, under your left breast, so as to touch the skin; or, if I could just go as far as Dalmatia; there's a mountain——"

"Better go to the devil at once; and even then, I fancy, I should be there first. I understand thee. Begone from my presence; and call Signor Benedetto, and be quick."

The old man went out.

Signor Benedetto de Nobili, a doctor of laws, and a great friend of the Medici, was frequently with Malatesta to confer on the affairs of the Palleschan party. He used to come to him at night-time, using the utmost precaution, lest those visits should come to the ears of the magistrates, under whose suspicions it was no light matter to fall.

Signor Benedetto was an old man, of a comely and venerable appearance, but of a mean and malignant disposition. He was avaricious and hypocritical, ingenious in hatching plots, and a consummate dissembler. He was the only one of the Palleschi, who was in communication with Baglioni; and this precaution was necessary, to prevent the Captain-general from becoming an object of suspicion to the people, which would have entirely ruined the hopes of the Medicean faction.

Whilst the friar and Malatesta were occupied in the conversation which we have related, Signor Benedetto was waiting in an adjoining room. It may be asked, "Why could he not be present, and assist at the conference?"

It was Malatesta's rule, that what could be said in the presence of four ears, should not be said before six. Benedetto came in, dressed in the lucco, having the hood drawn over his head. He quietly seated himself where the friar had been sitting before, and said,—

"Well! and how now?"

"Why," replied Baglioni, "matters go on all right; see, here I have a letter from Baccio."

He took from beneath his pillow a note, which the friar had brought sewn up in the hem of his habit. It was written in cypher. "This fellow," said Malatesta grinning, "does one thing and devises a hundred."

He opened the note, and having run over the first lines with that indistinct and rapid utterance, which serves to dismiss matters of no moment, in order to come to the really important parts, he continued:—

"Yesterday morning I was talking with Troilus degli Ardinghelli about the pretty girls of Florence, when he happened to tell me of a young lass that he had wooed and secretly married (the details he will tell you himself,) a daughter of Niccolo de Lapi. I at once pounced upon him, as he is the best bred, the most agreeable and ingenious gentleman of all Florence; and I thought it advisable to send him to you. If he should succeed in gaining a footing in Niccolo's house, and get himself accepted as his son-in-law, and appear in public as one of the family, he can so manage matters as to gain full intelligence on all points, can render us extraordinary services during the siege; and afterwards, make these Piagnoni, these mourners, mourn in real earnest. I did not fully reveal the plan to this youngster, because having just hinted at it, I fancied he rather drew in. But he is a poor gallant, fond of pleasure and profusion, and living like the great; he has been bred at court amongst nobles, and cannot brook the having to bespatter his buskins every day in the mud of this camp. There is nothing he would not do for the favour of the Medici, and to be employed by them. I have told your Highness all that is necessary, and since your Highness's greatness and wisdom is so exalted, you will be able very easily to turn it to account, &c. &c."

"The villain has not done amiss in this matter, eh?"

"Nay, excellently well, I think! All promises success. Oh, I know this young fellow well, by sight at least, his ancestors are from San Gimignano. I recollect, when they were playing at quintain in front of the gate of the palace of the Medici, (he had an Arab horse which went like a beam of light) he was more graceful in the exercise than anybody else. Besides, he is as handsome as the sun is bright. Oh, his father was entirely devoted to the magnificent Julian, so that his son, if he has not degenerated, is a Palleschan to the heart's core. But how the deuce has he succeeded in making a foray into the domains of the wily old Niccolo?"

"I'm just going to tell you, Signor Benedetto, but don't let us spin out our talk till it's broad-day, and you be seen going forth from this place. Troilus, you must know, saw this damsel of Niccolo's, whose name is Lisa, at a fête of the Potenze,* before the Medici left the city. He discovered who she was, found out where she lived, and was so skilful in his address that the girl fell in love with him. But they had no opportunities of meeting in Florence. By-and-by, Niccolo went with his family to a farm that he has near Poggio-à-Caiano. Troilus, who was at Poggio with the lords Alexander and Hippolytus, not being able to draw her over to his wishes—for the girl had resolutely determined that she would be married,—Troilus, I say, mentioned the matter to the Medici, as he was annoyed to think he was baffled; and as is the case with young men, the matter became a subject of merriment; so that at last they made it a point to win their game, and prepared to play off on the maiden and her father the most extraordinary and splendid trick that was ever heard of. Troilus gave the girl to understand that he would marry her; but under the pretext of fearing that Niccolo would never consent to such an alliance, unless compelled by necessity, he said that the ceremony must be private. Lisa, though reluctantly, consented.

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* The "Potenze" were ancient national and periodical games called by that name—TRANS.

"They arranged that she should repair, on a certain morning, to a parish church, about a mile from Poggio; and they so managed that the priest was not at home. Thereupon a certain Michel, a groom of Troilus's, habited himself in the priest's vestments, in rochet and stole——"

(Malatesta's laughter rose into a perfect paroxysm, as he went on recounting this villainous and dishonourable transaction; it appearing to him the finest joke in the world)—"And performed the nuptials with all the ceremonies, in which he had been instructed. He! he! he!—what fools! A splendid joke! He! he! he! Lisa was satisfied,——and befooled! The Medici thought it fine fun, and had something to laugh at for many a day—-he! he! he!"

Signor Benedetto, naturally malevolent, was besides, for other reasons, that we shall see presently, no friend to Niccolo; he, therefore, laughed heartily, so that his body shook, a if he were trotting on horseback. But when he heard that matters appertaining to the church were mixed up in this trick, he shook his head, though with a suppressed smile.

On the present occasion there was no obligation on him to play the hypocrite, but when a man has acquired the habit he does so without being aware of it.

"Oh! oh!" he said at last with a grave face, "that, though—that was a little too bad! A profanation! In the tavern with knaves, says the proverb, but touch not the saints."

Malatesta looked round the room, as if to see whether any one was there; then, turning to the doctor, he said:—

"Sir Benedetto, we are alone, you must know! don't then play the Piagnone with me; it's lost breath: we understand each other. If the devil had to carry away one of us two, he would be puzzled to know which to take for the worst. When you are in the market-place, play the friar Savonarola as much as you will; but here, all must be above board."

Benedetto, feeling himself struck home, said to himself, "I deserve this," but made no reply.

"In short," continued Malatesta, "Niccolo never knew anything of this marriage. After some time Lisa had a son; and by the assistance of her sister, who was entrusted with the secret, when she began to give signs of her condition, the whole matter was kept so secret, that none of her family ever knew anything about it. Troilus, in the meantime, owing to the war that was expected, had gone to join the Palleschi, and had thought no more of Lisa or Niccolo, or any such entertainments. The child, he says, must be in some house in Florence, but he don't know where. Now, we must find it, and let Niccolo know all. Piagnone, or no Piagnone, it will be necessary for him to accept Troilus for his son-in-law, rather than see his daughter exposed to shame."

"And Troilus, is he willing to engage in this scheme?"

"Why at first he was not, and played the child with me; but I have soundly rated him, and have given him to know that all this conscience and scrupulosity are things, that may leave one to perish with hunger. Ah! I can tell you that he'll show himself a gallant fellow. Cats, now-a-days, open their eyes betimes. Now, then, there are two things to be done: and you, as a Florentine, well acquainted with this city, can easily—so that this is your business. Well, the first is, to find out who has the child, and where he is. The second, to manage so as for Niccolo to know the whole matter—or—why not? The child might be taken to his house at once; in a word, bethink you of this business. Either he will be willing to hush up the affair, and will readily receive Troilus to his house, or there will be an uproar: he will rage and storm like a host of devils, will utter reproaches against his daughter fit only to be addressed to a dog, upbraid her and expel her from his house, and then Lisa will have to betake herself to Troilus; and, when the old man's first ebullition of rage is over, he will have to eat the dish we have cooked for him, even if he burst."

"Capital, capital; all easy enough: leave the care of it to me."

"Now begone, for heaven's sake; for in a few minutes seven will strike. Courage and prudence —and God aid you!"

The two villains separated. The doctor, by certain passages, regained the street. Malatesta remained with his pains, and perhaps with the pleasure, of having concocted some pains worse than his own for so many unfortunate people.

CHAPTER VII.

The room in which Malatesta usually held his council, and received all who came to have an audience of him, and which we may call his reception chamber, was a large apartment looking into the street, adorned with frescoes, the works of Francia and Pietro Perugino. It was lighted by six windows, and under the parapet of each, there were ranged on either side two seats of brick, covered with a marble slab. In the middle of the wall, at the bottom of the room, was a sort of wooden pedestal, on which was fixed the banner of Malatesta; here and there were displayed, like so many trophies, many pieces of his armour, particularly remarkable for their fine temper and lightness; necessary qualities in his case, that he might be able to wear them, now that he was become so enfeebled by disease.

It was the custom, that every morning, at sunrise, the captains of the guard at the city gates should send to Malatesta one of their officers, to report to him anything that might have occurred during the night, and to receive the orders of the day. At this moment, these officers were all assembled in the antechamber; and as, just at that time, the discharges of artillery from the camp had commenced, they were looking out of the windows, which were in the direction of the Ponte-alle-Grazie, talking together of these loud reports. Not doubting, but that if anything serious should occur, some messenger would come to give information of it; they were gazing intently, now in the direction of San Niccolo, now in that of the bridge, to see if any body was coming. But as far as the eye reached, there was not a soul. It was raining; and what with the weather, the solitude, the uneasy longing for their turn to come to be admitted into the presence-chamber, and the deep and distant rumbling of the artillery, it was one of those half-hours that casts a shade over every body's spirits.

All at once, a friar of St. Mark's was seen wending his way from the Ponte-alle-Grazie, who, one would think by the way he waded through the mud, found little impediment from his friar's robe.

Soldiers of all times and of all nations, (at least so we may believe) have ever had a decided taste for banter and raillery. Amongst themselves, a joke sometimes costs them a smart thrust, and then they think before they speak; but if they chance on one, who cannot or will not reply in this fashion, then let them alone; so little truth is there in the notion, that man, by nature, is a generous animal. Scarcely had they caught sight, then, of the good friar, than they began to laugh and jeer.

"Here are your news! This is the messenger! See here, the bearer of the excommunication."

The friar still advanced; and when close to the windows, instead of continuing his path, he entered the great gate; and then the shouts of merriment rose to the highest pitch. Besides, thought they, to pass away the time, while Malatesta keeps us waiting, and to relieve our ennui, we will amuse ourselves by making fun with this friar. But the friar was a match for every man of them; for he was no other than our old friend Fanfulla.

Having entered the courtyard, and seeing the stable-boys curry-combing their horses under the portico, soldiers in one part, arquebusses and pikes in another, and breathing such a warlike atmosphere, he felt, as it were, his heart enlarged. Some bursts of laughter behind his back he could not fail to notice, and a witticism or two upon his garb had reached his ear; but at that moment, delighted as he was, and full of his object, he would not have turned round, if a mine had been sprung behind him. It must be added, that as he walked along, he had not lost his time, for he had been composing a set speech, of great eloquence, thinking to heighten his reputation, and duly to set forth his request to the Florentine General; and this matter so occupied him, that he had no time to attend to anything else.

Since we are on this point, we will inform the reader, that Fanfulla was subject to that infatuation, which seems to possess all great men, of pretending but little acquaintance with the art they do know, and a great deal with that which they do not. Just so, this good man, who was an excellent soldier, affected to be a great orator; merely from having, during his monastic life, by dint of hearing sermons, reading books on all subjects, and conversing with the friars, and all who came to the convent, furnished his memory with a vast store of phrases, sentiments, and fine periods; but furnished, you must know, just as the shop of a general dealer is.

He mounted the stairs, and entered the antechamber, at the same time saluting the assembled company, and approaching the door-keeper he said:—

"With your favour, when it is convenient, I wish to have a word with his Highness."

"Your name?"

"Brother George da Lodi, of St. Mark's."

"Wait here. But it will be some time—you see how many there are in the antechamber."

Fanfulla, without further reply, sat down at a table, and resting his arm on it, he extended his legs, and, with his head thrown back, and gently jogging his foot up and down, without looking anybody in the face, he continued quite absorbed in the thought of his intended speech. He was not altogether dissatisfied with the manner in which he had arranged it; but he wanted to introduce into it some little infusion of philosophy, as Cellini writes that he did, when conversing with Paul III., about the method of colouring a diamond. Every body can see, in both cases, how much philosophy had to do with the matter; especially in the case of Fanfulla, whose knowledge of philosophy consisted in a few ideas of physics,—true or false, matters not,—and in some confused notions of astrology.

Whilst he was thus occupied, the officers, who before were gazing out of the window, now turned their back to it; and having scrutinised the friar, and finding him to be of a different mould and deportment to what they expected, they looked at one another.

"What think you," said one, "of that bluff face of this servant of God? It would not ill become the shoulders of a bailiff."

"The deuce!" exclaimed another, "only one eye, and a cut on his face. Why, truly, methinks that when these reverend men elect their prior, they must amuse themselves by making the platters and porringers fly about."

"Maybe he has had a battle with the cat in the refectory!"

"Or perhaps tumbled down the cellar stairs."

With such-like banter, and a good deal of laughter, all eyes were on Fanfulla. He at first paid no attention to them, from being entirely taken up with his own thoughts; and from never having been used to be jested with, he did not imagine there could be any one who would make so free with him. At last, however, getting an inkling of it, and directing his observation to them for a moment, he became aware that he was their butt. Looking round, he saw that he was the only friar in the room, and felt that peculiar internal sensation, which one experiences when passion is rising; but just fresh from the admonitions of Father Benedict, and with his fixed resolution not to return to his old practices, he said in his heart, drawing in his breath, and throwing his garment round him, "Come, Fanfulla, don't begin your old habits again." And casting his eyes down, he essayed to assume a demure look, which as little suited that countenance of his, as a grenadier's moustache would, the celestial face of one of Raphael's Madonnas.

But the jeers, and laughter, and derisive speeches still continued. Fanfulla in no way showed what he felt, except by a frequent motion of his knees, which went up and down, just like the trotting of an ass. But his blood was much in the condition of water in a pot, on the point of boiling over.

Above his head, fastened to the wall, about seven or eight feet from the ground, was one of those clocks which go with weights, and these were hanging within a short distance of Fanfulla's nose, who was looking at them, much as a schoolboy looks longingly at a bunch of grapes which are beyond his reach; and he was muttering between his teeth, "Methinks, these too seem to flout me, and to present themselves to my hand, as if in mockery, now that they know I am a monk, and cannot make use of them. Ten years ago, my fine fellows, you should see how I would send a couple of them at your heads, to teach you better manners." And whilst, with a sigh, he discovered how difficult he found it to maintain the character he bore, his hand, as it were, of its own accord, was raised to those little leaden cylinders, which would have been such admirable projectiles under the circumstances, and he twirled them about in his fingers. What a tremendous temptation! But let not the reader be alarmed; Fanfulla came off victorious.

His antagonists, all this time, rendered more confident by his silence, still kept on; and matters were beginning to go too far. A young beardless stripling of a soldier could not be satisfied without having his jest on the friar; but the latter, feeling irritated and annoyed by such a little fool, could bear it no longer. He sprung to his feet; and Fanfulla was himself once more, when, advancing slowly towards the group of officers, he said, in the tone of a person who was sick and tired of this kind of thing:—

"You would do well to remember, my masters, the goodly proverb, that every jest, when short, is best; and the present, if I mistake not, has already lasted too long. And you, my fine spark," (turning to the youth who had spoken last,) "do your best to get out of the way, and look to yourself; for to aim at playing the soldier, with those broomstick shoulders—such a little, thin, meagre fellow! But

I would have you know, that this eye was picked out by the point of a Spanish lance at the battle of Ravenna, at the time when your nurse was drawing on your first pair of breeks; that this scar which I have on my crown, I got in attempting to defend that valiant knight, King Francis, on the field of Pavia, when your nurse was feeding you with pap; that these two fingers were left on the field of Marignano, by a stroke of a two-handed sword, wielded by a Switzer of Unterwalden, when your nurse—" but this last achievement of this good nurse, if Fanfulla described it, we will omit, for brevity's sake.

"Now," he continued, "not to keep you any longer in suspense, I will tell you roundly as a well's mouth, that were I not a friar, and in a word, had I not still my gown on, I would ere this have summoned you outside to say a word in your ear, according to the law and custom observed among soldiers; but with this habit on, at least for a while longer, I shall beg you to do me the kindness to leave me alone, as I am not used to be the butt of mobs, and I would have you to know, I wear my patience only on my back."*

At this rebuke, they one and all (but especially the young soldier) were abashed and crest-fallen, as generally happens, in the case of a man who, intending to inflict a blow, receives one himself instead. They adopted the course, which every one with a particle of sense would on such an occasion,—they acknowledged they were in the wrong, excusing themselves as they best could; and the only one amongst them all who till then had not opened his mouth, and who was a man already advanced in years, said with a smile:

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* The scapulary is also called *a patience.*

"When I lived among the Spaniards I learnt this proverb, 'One thinks he is going to catch another, and is caught himself.'"

With this joke the matter ended in laughter. But their mistake excited a great and general curiosity to know more of the history of so strange a character. They therefore politely requested him to inform them who he was; and some who had been present at the engagements alluded to by him, were more earnest than the rest, gathering round him on all sides.

Fanfulla, like all elderly people, especially those who have passed through many adventures in their lives, was fond of narrating them, and of talking about himself, so that, without much pressing, he told them from whence he came, mentioning his parents' names; but when at last, after having told his own name, he added: "But by my comrades I was always called Fanfulla," there burst out a general exclamation of surprise and delight, for at that time even the very children had heard of the famous combat, in which the Italians had been victorious, twenty-six years ago, and knew the names of the warriors who had fought on that occasion, as their memory was held by all soldiers in the highest estimation.

Among the officers who were present at this scene, was one who had served in the Spanish army under Gonsalvo; he had been an eye-witness of the combat at Barletta; his name was Boscherino. He opened his arms, and throwing them round Fanfulla's neck, said:

"And who would ever have recognised you in this black and white pelisse? Fanfulla a friar! oh! oh! Before I die, I may expect to see the Sultan a cardinal! But let me tell you, you looked much better with a sword at your side; and you—don't you remember me? It's pretty clear, if I have not changed my skin, that I have my hair,—don't you remember Boscherino? we are now grown old, but still our own legs carry us."

"They carry us too well, at least I speak for myself," replied Fanfulla, recognising his ancient comrade, and addressing him jestingly, "had they not have carried me so well as they do, I had remained quiet and still in my convent; and when I entered there two years agone, I thought I was quite cured of my taste for these diversions, since, with so many misfortunes, and that last medley of the sack of Rome, I felt myself cracked, like the splintered staff of a lance: but so it is, with two years of quiet, and a table spread every day, I am become a colt once more."

Hereupon began a dialogue between the two friends, so full of *do you remember this? and do you remember that?* that they did not speedily make an end. At last Boscherino said, after having mentioned many old comrades:

"And that poor Hector! do you remember

him? That melancholy fool, he fancied he was living in the time of Tristan and queen Yseult![*] —to wind up in that way!—Well, it was all his own seeking,—fancy, he wouldn't drink! I said to him, when I saw him with that long visage,—Hector, let's go to—to—what the deuce was the name of mine host of the sun? Ah, I recollect, Arsenico. Let us go, I said, to Arsenico's; he had wine fit for a king, that made the very cork fly out,—why, I might as well have told him to fly. Well, if you won't drink, you'll be sorry for't, said I! And truly he made my words good. But I needn't tell you about that; you were at the entertainment with him, you know—"

"I know it too well," replied Fanfulla, interrupting him, and putting on a demure and sorrowful countenance; "say no more on that point. I, fool and villain that I was, was the cause of all that misery,—that poor girl's fatal mistake was all owing to me—"

"How?—What?" asked Boscherino, vehemently.

"Oh! as for the how, I have already told you, that I will talk no more at all about this business. The matters are now past and gone; and for what is done there is no remedy."

"Well, let it pass," rejoined Boscherino, with a smile, indeed, but somewhat angrily. "But of that Saracen maid, may no mention be made of her either? What was the name of that beautiful Moorish damsel, with her shawl twisted turban-wise about her head?"

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[*] An account of the old and entertaining romance of Tristan and Yseult is to be found in Dunlop's History of Fiction, vol. i. p. 221.—Trans.

[†] Fanfulla alludes to a youthful frolic of his, elsewhere mentioned by the author. He personated Hector Fieramosca, whom he much resembled in other respects, by putting on his purple cloak; but this jest resulted in very serious consequences.—Trans.

"Zoraide," replied Fanfulla; "with respect to her, I will tell you all you wish to know. Do you remember at the beginning of the pontificate of Julian II., when Valentino was a prisoner in the castle? Well, at that time"——But here the chamberlain, having given a sign to Fanfulla, who was so absorbed in conversation that he did not observe him, approached, and, pulling him along by the sleeve, said, as he drew aside a curtain which hung before the door of Malatesta's apartment, "Enter, friar George."

Hereupon ensued a double misfortune. Boscherino and his companions were left, with a longing to know the fate of Zoraide; and the worthy Fanfulla, owing to the quarrel in which he had been engaged with the officers, and the conversation that followed it, had quite let slip out of his mind his set speech; and he had now no time to re-arrange his ideas, and make the necessary preparation to acquit himself with some degree of credit. Ushered thus suddenly into the presence of Malatesta, the captain-general, it happened to him, as it might to a coachman, who, in driving four frisky young horses, either from drowsiness or inattention, should let the reins loose; and then, if on a sudden they shy and make a bolt, he is half an hour before he gathers up his reins well in hand; and, in his confusion, intending to pull the right rein, he pulls the left;—so that, unless his good fortune serves him, he is certain to break his neck. But Fanfulla found that such good fortune happens but rarely. Finding that all his eloquence had escaped him, he came forward with the feelings of a man going to battle unarmed. But yet, making a virtue of necessity, and without entirely losing his self-possession, he saluted Malatesta with a courteous but easy air; and coughing once or twice to gain time, said:—

"Most noble captain, if I have taken the trouble to come to you,—I should rather say, if I am come to trouble you,—the occasion of my visit is, a desire that will perhaps appear to you little in accordance with the dress I wear; but if it be true, what astrologers affirm, that man cannot withdraw himself from that influence, whereby the stars, or rather, we should say, the planets, regulate his course, even from his birth, and guide, by immutable laws, the acts and operations of his life; or, as philosophers and naturalists teach, that no good can be derived from binding to the same yoke the tiger and the lamb, because each animal must follow its own bent; and it is the greatest folly to expect either to go in opposition to their inherent nature; and whoever expects otherwise, sets, as the vulgar say, the fox to mind the geese; and for this reason I have come, as I have said,—because, feeling myself every way fit, thanks to my hardy constitution, to practise the art for which alone heaven has given me a propensity, and seeing the need which, in its present emergency, this city may have of men who are acquainted with our profession ;—that, of the said profession there may indeed be found some more skilful than I am, but none who have ever practised it with greater cordiality : and did I not fear I may trespass on your attention, I could show you that as to experience, and I could tell you——"

Malatesta had, as a mark of favour to Fanfulla, granted him an audience before many others, out of regard to the habit of St. Mark, which he wore; for at that time in Florence it was necessary to show no slight respect to that brotherhood; but when he saw him with that strange visage, which, to say truth, had a touch of the simpleton in it, and gathering from his curious and rambling address that it would be likely to have not a few divisions and subdivisions, he had not patience to hear him out; and in order to get rid of him, he cut his harangue short, by saying in a tone in which there was less courtesy, than there was in the substance of his reply,—

" From your being a member of St. Mark's, as well as on your own account, I will very willingly do, as far as I am able—that is, when I know your wishes. What is this art of yours? which you have as yet omitted to tell me. May be, you are the chirurgeon of the convent, and wish to give your services to our wounded? I shall be much obliged to you for so doing."

Fanfulla, half angrily, muttered between his teeth, "It seems that to-day no one will understand me."

Then in a loud voice, he said, "I'll do you good service in dealing wounds, but not in healing them; and to tell you all in one word, your Highness must know that I am brother George da Lodi now, but heretofore Fanfulla da Lodi, and am ready to be the same man again any day, provided your Highness will accept my services; and I hope to convince you that two years of convent life have not so greatly altered me, but that I am still good for something. And see here, (drawing a piece of paper from his bosom) see here is my certificate from Signor Prospero Colonna. Besides too, I fancy your Highness has not heard of me for the first time just now."

Malatesta exclaimed, laughing, "Knave, why didst thou not tell me this at first, without overlaying it with so many speechifyings about natural philosophers and astrologers, that I fancied you were a preacher. But now I know what you would be at, and that you wish to handle the lance again, I will enlist you with all my heart, and employ you. And upon second thoughts I think you are right, that you will from what I have heard, make a better soldier than preacher."

Having read the testimonial of Prospero Colonna, he said as he handed it back to him, "This was not necessary, since, independently of this, I know you for a brave knight."

Malatesta, from the novelty of the case, begged to learn by what strange vicissitudes it had come to pass, that so renowned a soldier had ended by turning monk. When he had heard his story, he turned to Amico d'Arsoli, chief of one of the troops of cavalry, who were in the service of the Florentines, and who was present with some other officers, and said to him—

"On my appointment, you will be so good as to enrol this man in your troop; but, by-the-bye, Fanfulla, how are you off for your equipment, and for a horse above all? for you will not want now-a-days to commence serving on foot."

"As for arms," replied Fanfulla, "I am pretty well furnished; but as to my horse, to say truth, he is a little hipped; please God, however, it may be, that when I come to shiver a lance with those German knaves yonder, that I shall provide myself with a better, and pay for him with cold iron."

"As you list," replied Malatesta; "but whether or no, you shall soon receive some pay, if you want any for immediate use. Now go and get your arms, and then come back, as I shall soon have something for every man to do."

Fanfulla withdrew, almost ready to leap out of his skin for joy, and reached the convent again in a twinkling.

There the rumour had already got abroad, that brother Bombard, as they called him, was going; and, as they all knew too the object of his departure, many friars and laics were in the cloister, curious to see him set out, transformed into a soldier. Scarcely arrived at the convent, he saddled his horse, and led him out into the court-yard: after that he hastened to his cell, where he equipped himself in his armour, and over his coat of mail, as a sort of cloak, he put on his scapulary of black serge, of the order of St. Dominic, which the sash of his sword fastened tightly round him. In order to preserve as much of the friar as he could, he took, besides, his rosary, and fastened it to a large sized poniard that he wore on his left side; and thus equipped, he bent his steps to the cell of Father Benedict, as he thought it would be hardly becoming to depart without a formal leave. Having listened modestly to his parting admonitions, and kissed his hand, he descended to the court-yard, where he found the brothers of the convent waiting to take their farewell. After having saluted some, embraced others, and pressed the hand of a few, (which last were not the most fortunate, for what with his naturally vigorous grasp, and his steel gauntlet, it was about as delightful a sensation as that of finding one's fingers in a vice), he prepared to mount. But if he hoped that his steed too had recovered his martial spirit, he was soon to discover that he had mistaken his mettle. In times gone by, there was no holding him to put foot in stirrup; and no sooner did he feel his rider in the saddle than he was off like a shot. But now he suffered his master to mount at his ease, without any further movement than a decided inclination towards the left side, when he felt his weight. It required a sharp touch of the spur to induce him to move, and a still more vigorous application of it, to get him to go towards the gate, that led out into the street, instead of turning into the stable, as he obstinately tried to do, in spite of the bit that guided his head in the opposite direction.

However, after some tugging, and spurring, and driving, he at last passed through the gateway, and set off, whilst Fanfulla, still urging him on with his heels, kept turning round, and giving and receiving salutations, as long as he could be seen. A few days after, about nine o'clock at night, he was going his rounds through Florence, at the head of six halberdiers, reconnoitring all the streets and lanes of the quarter of St. John, and doing what would now be called going the round, but was then called sentry-duty. It was a dark, tempestuous night, such as often visits Florence in the month of November, cold and windy, and the rain descending in torrents. Fanfulla heeded the weather but little; and in order to entertain his troop, which consisted of a fresh levy of young soldiers, (thinking too that it was an occasion on which they might do a little of what was good) he made them go over their rosary as they passed along through the streets. He, himself, going in front, the rest behind in single file, close to the wall, that they might receive less of the rain.

The reader must not, however, imagine that the soldiers of that day were so many capuchins, since neither would Fanfulla's companions have repeated their prayers, had it not been from fear of the staff of a huge partisan that he bore on his shoulders, and with which he had already threatened to brush off the dust from the back of one, who showed a disposition to play the *esprit fort.* Persuaded, then, by this argument, which, if the laws of versification had permitted it, might very well have been included with the rest, in that admirable verse in the treatises on logic,

Barbara, celarent, dario, ferio, baralipton;

they continued their rounds, which had now lasted about an hour with such pleasure, as those well know, whose lot it has been on a wretched winter's night, to carry the watchword round to seven or eight sentries.

At last, on turning the corner of Or San Michel to go through the Porta Rossa, they saw, by the light of a torch which they had with them, something that looked like a bundle of clothes on the ground, close to the wall. Whereupon approaching, and looking at it more closely, they perceived it was a young woman, sitting down in a crouching attitude, and who, in order to protect herself from the rain, had drawn her gown over her head. She appeared so drenched and bespattered with mud, that it was evident she must have been there for some time. Had she been lying down, it would have been suspected that she had been the victim of some deed of violence; but she was in a sitting posture.

"What the deuce—what can this be?" said Fanfulla, stopping with his men, to examine the object before him.

"Some silly runaway," said one.

"She appears like one of the figures of Dante's Inferno," said another, who was for showing his learning.

"Were it St. John's night," suggested a third, "it might be supposed that she was—that she must be—"

"Yes; exactly—a witch!" replied the *esprit fort* of the company, smiling contemptuously; "you don't see that she has not a goat's foot, stupid!"

"Well, well; let us see," said Fanfulla, and approaching close to her, said: "Hollo! my good girl; young woman, I say; hollo!"

But she, to whom these words were addressed, moved not. He repeated his call two or three times; then, raising the garment which concealed her face, he took hold of her arm, and shook her. She then slowly raised her head, and displayed to view a countenance that, it was easy to see, must once have been beautiful, but which at that instant appeared pale and sunk, like that of a corpse. Her eyes were wide open, but seemed to roll round in their sockets without any signs of life, and were fixed on those who stood before her, but without appearing to see them. In her arms was a young child, wrapt closely up in a woollen garment; it was sleeping calmly, with its little round cheeks, that looked the picture of health, because its mother, by sheltering it in her bosom, had succeeded in protecting it from the cold and rain.

All at once the poor forlorn creature, as if awaking, and shaking off her stupor, gave a start; and her first motion was that of hugging her child to her bosom, and sheltering it with her arms and clothes, while Fanfulla kept saying to her! "Hollo! what in the name of goodness are you doing here, at such a time, in this state? Up, get up,—what's all this? what's the matter with you?—tell me where you live, we'll conduct you to your home."

"Where I live?" replied the girl, bursting into tears, "nowhere—I have no longer a home—see here, my home are these muddy streets—this is my shelter, and the cradle of my poor wretched child." Saying this, she imprinted a wild kiss upon the lips of her infant, which awoke it. Its waking, and sending forth a piercing cry was the work of one and the same instant.

"It's no use waking that poor child, and setting it a-crying, when it don't trouble us," said Fanfulla, who at bottom had a good heart, as brave men generally have, and those who are somewhat free in the use of their hands, by a curious caprice of human nature.

"But have you no parents, no husband, father,

—mother, at all events? Whatever fortune denies us, a mother we all have, if we have nothing else."

But the young woman only wept the more, without making any other reply.

"Well," said Fanfulla, "in the present case something else besides weeping and raving is necessary. The night is wet and cold, and this child would not live through it, out here; so, my good girl, get you up; under cover we will consider what's to be done,—let us go."

And with kind words, using at the same time a little gentle force, he raised her from the ground, and, at a slow pace, walked along by her side, not omitting to support her feeble frame, and encourage her by soothing words; and, at last, even carrying her child, (which made Fanfulla look oddly enough), till he had conducted her to the palace of the Seigniory, and deposited her in a room on the ground floor, occupied by the guards of the great gate; where, at any rate, they were sheltered from the rain, and where there was a good fire. There, by degrees, getting dry, and being somewhat restored, the girl began to talk. At first she showed symptoms of alarm, when she saw so many soldiers standing round, who rudely and unceremoniously gazed at her; especially as each of them made their several remarks on her. But Fanfulla, observing that this scrutiny and these observations evidently annoyed her, induced them to withdraw into an adjoining apartment, partly by good words, and partly by showing his displeasure, and that he was not averse to the use of that argument, which we have already observed, the masters of the science of logic have forgotten to enumerate.

He knew not why, but he felt a deep interest in that poor unknown creature; and there was nothing he would not have done to serve her. The young woman herself, too, now somewhat reassured, and deriving encouragement from the kindly heart which appeared through the old soldier's manners, a little rough, it is true, but still kind and tender, was prevailed upon to unfold her sorrows to him, and to detail her adventures. But as this narrative would probably appear ill-connected and broken, such, as might be expected from a person who was suffering from such agitation of mind and such confusion of ideas, we think it better to omit it. But since it is necessary that the reader should know who she was, and be made acquainted with her circumstances, it is desirable for this purpose that we resume the thread of our discourse a little further back, and relate a few particulars concerning Niccolo's family, for which we have not, before now, been able to find room in the course of our narrative.

CHAPTER VIII.

Opposite the small side-door of Santa Maria Maggiore, is to be seen at the present day a house of the insipid and tasteless architecture of the eighteenth century; which, after being the hotel of the *Black Eagle,* is now called *The New York.* On this spot, formerly occupied by the College, and in part, but in still more ancient times, by the houses of the Cerretani, there stood, at the period we are describing, the habitation of Niccolo, built up from the thirteenth to the fourteenth century, and similar to some of that period, which still remain in Florence. May God preserve them a while, and free them from those landlords, who, to augment their rents, out of one room make four, open windows, and bedaub the fronts with whitewash. But let us quit this subject, since it is but an ignoble task to talk of taste, of antiquities, and architecture to those who have no soul for such things, and who respond only to the chink of coin.

The house, in which the family of the Lapi resided (separated from the Palace of the Carnesecchi by the street De Conti) was of a square form, solid and massive, consisting of three stories, with a facing reaching up to the first floor, of carved stone, blackened by time; the walls upward were covered with arabesque work and festoons; on the top was a terrace supported by slender pillars. The roof projected several feet, and the transverse beams that supported it, extending beyond the wall, had the appearance of huge corbeils, ornamented with rudely carved woodwork. The windows of the ground-floor, perhaps a little too much on a level with the passers-by in the street, were fortified with great iron bars; beneath them was a stone bench, the whole length of the frontage; on which, at the height of twenty feet, were fixed, between the capitals, bars of iron, about three spans long, bent upward, with an opening on the top, in which were fixed, on festival occasions, torches or banners, and from them was suspended a large ring. At one corner of the mansion, at the same elevation, was one of those lamps, also of iron, such as are seen at the corners of the Strozzi Palace, the work of Caparra. At the great gate, which was in the centre, were two large bronze bells, suspended from the mouth of two lions' heads; and to see how the panels were everywhere strengthened with nails and iron plates, the idea naturally presented itself, that a visit there by robbers would not be lost time.

On entering, there was a passage, the roof of which was divided into compartments, filled with excellent frescoes, and which opened on to a square courtyard; around which, under a handsome and well-proportioned porch, you might see many historical representations, also al fresco, of the age and school of Masaccio. In the middle of the passage itself, two doors gave admittance to the ground-floor. The one on the left led to four rooms, which was Niccolo's warehouse, his counting-house, and the place where he attended, with his young men, to the various details of his business; the other, on the right, served for ingress to his own suite of rooms, which he had chosen to occupy ever since his age, though still hale and vigorous, had rendered it a trouble to mount the stairs. The first floor was allotted to his sons; the upper one was occupied by his daughters and the females of his house, who were thus in the most retired part of the mansion, and entirely separated from the rest.

The old man's room (and have done with your descriptions! I fancy my reader may say—but how are we to depict a group of figures unless a little canvass is allowed for them?) his room, I say, was every way suited to him who occupied it; that is, its arrangements were in a style that was grave and simple. Covered with Flemish tapestry, which represented various scenes from the Bible, with a ceiling of dark-coloured wood, formed into large squares, it contained but little furniture; a bed of polished walnut-tree, the square frame of which was covered with purple cloth, was supported by four posts, resting on a flooring, which, in the form of a basement, was placed round the bed, and served as a stool to get into it; two wooden chests, carved all over in mezzo relievo (these Niccolo's wife had brought into the house, when she came there as a bride, and according to the custom of the time, they contained her wardrobe); and several arm-chairs of purple leather, studded with brass nails.

By the side of the bed was a niche in the wall, about eight feet from the floor, in which hung a Dominican's gown; beneath it stood a silver urn, shaped somewhat like a chest, and a lamp, suspended by a chain from the roof, was burning in front of it. The gown was the last, which the friar Savonarola had worn (whose portrait was hung on the adjoining wall, enclosed in an ebony frame), and was the same which they had taken off from him at the time of his execution. The urn contained the ashes of the pile on which he had been burnt; and these, which Niccolo regarded as the relics of a martyr, and as the memorials of a master and a friend, were cherished by him with the most affectionate and profound veneration.

A few days after the obsequies of Baccio, he was sitting after supper, where he usually took his station at dusk, in a spacious chimney-corner, by the side of a blazing fire; he had all his family about him, and several persons, who were then the most influential men in Florence, and who often repaired thither in the evening, not that Niccoli at that time held any public office, but only from the regard they entertained for him, the high estimation in which they held his experience in political matters, and the authority he possessed among the party of the Piagnoni, of which he might be called the life and soul.

There was Bernardo da Castiglione, the father of Dante, a most bitter opponent of the Palleschan party, and one of the most esteemed of his own, which was that of the plebeians, who were for the most unqualified democracy, and opposed, therefore, to the Notables, of whom, as we have mentioned, the gonfalonier Niccolo Capponi was the chief.

There were two Dominican friars—Father Benedict da Faenza, whom we have seen as the superior of St. Mark's, a man of the most amiable character, and of very extensive knowledge, whether in theological subjects, or in Greek and Latin literature; but his disposition was too gentle for those times of bold and desperate counsels: and Father Zaccaria da Fivizzano, of Santa Maria Novella, an eloquent preacher, and an enthusiastic agitator of the people, who were inflamed by him to the love of liberty, with the stirring and prophetic eloquence of Savonarola.

There was Francesco Ferruccio, who, from a merchant, had become a soldier, a man who might be said to be of the purest metal, body and soul; one of those who may fall, but are never conquered, much less ever yield; one of those great men who sometimes are alone sufficient to retard the downfall of a kingdom—a fearless soldier, a skilful commander, fortunate in his undertakings, rigid in his discipline, and inflexible towards his soldiers, who, notwithstanding, were warmly attached to him, because they knew that he was, at the same time, just and liberal—a warm admirer of the school and tactics of John de Medici, captain of the *black bands,* whom he strove to imitate; so that it was remarked among his followers, that he was too much the Signor John. He stained, we must admit, his splendid virtues with some acts of cruelty; but let us remember that he lived in the sixteenth century, that he loved his country, and that he had to witness her long and painful struggle, and to foresee her inevitable downfall.

Bernardo, sitting next to Niccolo, was speaking with him in a low tone, and was apparently occupied with some important subject of conversation. Father Benedict, in deep thought, turning to the fire first the palm and then the back of his hands, sat next; and at his right hand (following the semicircle round the hearth) was Father Zaccaria, who, with his dark eyes turned upward, with an expression, like those of the Olympian Jupiter of Phidias, displayed a long and thick beard, with the stern and inspired attitude of the Moses of Michel Angelo. Francesco Ferruccio, standing up in the midst of them, turned his back toward the fire, and his shadow, waving with the motion of the flames, was projected on the opposite wall, on which was pourtrayed, in gigantic dimensions, his lofty and colossal figure.

Around, in other parts of the room, lounging on their seats, wearied with the labours of the day, were Averardo and Vieri, Niccolo's sons, with their corslets on. Bindo was standing up by the side of a table, at which Lisa and Laodamia were engaged in preparing thread, and sewing bandages for the wounded. He had in his hands a helmet, which he had just been polishing; and stealing a glance at his father, to see if he was observing him, he was, in a whisper, entreating Laodamia to find him two or three feathers to make a crest to it. The maiden, with a shake of the head and a mournful smile, motioned him to be silent. Perhaps the sight of Baccio's bright sword, at her youthful brother's side, reminded her of him who had so lately fallen in the fight; or perhaps, thoughts still more painful and distressing about her ill-advised and unhappy sister occupied her mind.

Lisa, who was now eighteen, was younger than her sister by one year. Both might be called beautiful; but to look at them, everybody would have taken Laodamia for the youngest. Upon her noble and melancholy countenance, in the slow and soft movement of her azure pupils, and even in her voice and gesture, there shone conspicuous that pure and virginal charm which every eye perceives, every heart feels, and which yet it is impossible to describe; which, without being peculiar to one age more than another, without belonging exclusively to any condition, often adorns the countenance of the mother of a family, and is sought for in vain in that of a child; that inexpressible quality which (if I might venture to say it) appears to be the beauty of the soul, unveiling itself from beneath its corporeal covering; which, though a something entirely distinct from beauty, either always renders it irresistible and divine, where it exists, or more than makes up for its absence where it does not; that, in a word, which avenges even the partiality of fortune, by investing lowly and obscure poverty with the charms of dignity and grace.

This gem of a soul, that had never been contaminated by a guileful thought, made the face of Laodamia the face of an angel; nor had her life been in any respect different from that which her countenance indicated. Left at fifteen years of age without a mother, she had, with an understanding beyond her years, readily perceived that it rested with her to supply the place of one to her sister; and she had undertaken, and now for several years discharged, the duties belonging to that position. With regard to the rest of the family, it may be said that she was the pivot, on which the whole burden of domestic cares revolved. If at any time a harsh or unpleasant word was spoken in the family, Laodamia, with some pretty speech uttered in her gentle accents, and at the right moment, stilled the rising feeling, or turned the matter into laughter; whoever had a trouble, confided it to her; for, with her kind heart, she soon seemed to make it her own, sympathising with their sorrow, but still discovering some source of relief or consolation. If there was any important point to be deliberated on, Niccolo felt more confidence in her judgment than in that of any one else; while she, with a tone and manner full of timidity and diffidence, but with sound discretion, almost always succeeded in pointing out the most judicious course to be adopted. In a word, both among her relatives at home, and her friends and neighbours abroad, she was always called *The Angel of the Lapi, or, The Maid of Florence.*

About a year or two before the period of which we are speaking, she had frequently observed a young man, dressed in the fashion of the young gallants of the time, who used to pass almost every day before the house, sometimes alone, sometimes in company; he was frequently mounted on a beautiful jennet, which he managed very gracefully; and she had once or twice observed to Lisa, who sat at work by her side, *what a nice-looking young man,* but without thinking anything more of the matter than if she had said *what a beautiful flower;* and every time he passed by the house she looked at him with pleasure, but without any farther thought, just as she would have looked on a young girl of like beauty. One day their Highnesses, Alexander and Hippolytus Medici, as they were riding through the city, stopped by their house, and the two sisters saw, with some surprise, this young man in their company. The three cavaliers all of a sudden raised their heads, and fixed their eyes on them; when they had passed, they turned round, first one and then the other, and laughed to each other.

Laodamia, who was at the window, withdrew, and a blush at once rose to her face; it seemed that that laugh was in some way offensive to her native delicacy, and she experienced, as it were, a sense of pain and humiliation, without exactly knowing why. However, be the feeling what it might, true to that internal and mysterious voice, which in females is as sage and secure a guide as Experience itself, and which is called Modesty, ever after, when the horsemen passed, she went no more to the window, nor looked into the street. But poor Lisa, although admonished by her sister to do the same, being naturally headstrong, did just the contrary. At first she had observed, as Laodamia had, the handsome cavalier; but by-and-by, heedless of her sister's warning, whenever she heard the tramp of a horse on the pavement below, she leant down her head, and blushed; and approaching the window, pretended to be looking quite another way, but letting her eye alight every moment upon the horseman who was riding by.

The amiable Laodamia was not long in discerning what lurked beneath all this; she slightly alluded to the subject in a few words to her sister, who seemed rather displeased, and sharply repelled the insinuation, but her face became as red as fire. Laodamia plainly saw how matters really stood, and said no more.—She was well aware that she had a spirit that was not to be guided by a silken thread.

Lisa's heart, however, was good, her mind was generous and true, but her mother, who regarded her as a prodigy, and was distressed if anything were said or done to her, had not discovered, or if she had, only when too late, how ruinous is that fondness which, in order to save a child a few tears, forbears to let it know that everything and every body is not, at all times, to bend to its wishes. Accustomed to have her own way from a child, she could not endure that anything should thwart her; accustomed to the praises, or rather the flatteries of her mother, every little reproof visited on her by another she thought originated in malevolence; and she, whom a prudent and authoritative guide might have rendered a woman of lofty sentiments and a noble mind, left to herself, had become, instead, a proud and wayward girl.

However, since the first slight rebuke that Laodamia had administered to her sister with respect to the young knight, they had never again alluded to the subject; and, as between two persons who are in the habit of mutually communicating their every thought to each other, nothing produces such coldness as there being a single point on which they cannot speak, so there sprung up between the sisters, I will not say an ill-feeling exactly, but still they no longer regarded each other with the same eyes as before.

Laodamia knew very well that to speak to her sister on the subject of her love (for, though inexperienced herself, she felt pretty confident that love she must call it), and not show herself favourable to it, was running a great risk, with no other result than to estrange her entirely. To speak against her conscience, and to flatter her, was an idea she was incapable of; and the consequence was, she never alluded to the matter, but rather directed her thoughts in prayer, that God would save her from her impending danger. But every day she could see more and more clearly that her prayers were not heard, and that Lisa's heart was becoming gradually more and more weak. She noticed a change steal over her manners, her very countenance had undergone an alteration; she now neglected what once gave her pleasure. Some beautiful flowers that grew on the terrace at the top of the house, which she tended herself, and in which she had taken the greatest delight, were withering away for the want of water; a little bird, which had been a favourite pet, was like to die, since for two days it had been left without seed; and what more than all distressed Laodamia, she saw that she slighted her religious duties, or at any rate was very remiss and indifferent in her manner of performing them. Every one of these symptoms was a stab to the heart of the amiable Laodamia.

Meantime, the 1st of May arrived, which was celebrated as a festival in Florence by the Potenze, and especially by the young girls, with balls and other amusements, who, dressed in their best and smartest clothes, with wreaths of flowers on their heads, flocked in crowds to see the jousting, the game of quintain, or the contests at foot-ball. Lisa and Laodamia went in company with a female relative to witness the fête; and when in the square of Santa Croce, in the midst of a great crowd, all in a moment Lisa disappeared, nor, though they sought for her in every direction, did they succeed in finding her. She returned home, however, a little after the rest; and though Niccolo and others of the family looked on the circumstance as a very ordinary one, owing to the great confusion, yet Laodamia saw it in a very different light, though she said nothing, and a thousand fears filled her mind. But then she knew something that the rest of the family did not. The whole of that evening, though Lisa strove to appear as usual, she could not conceal from the penetrating eye of her sister a certain uneasy restlessness, a strange alteration in her whole appearance and manner.

Laodamia, noting these symptoms of an ever-deepening passion, which oppressed her mind with a thousand dark and painful suspicions, had good reason to feel the bitterest anguish. She saw only too plainly, that an honourable and virtuous termination was not to be expected from it. The youth belonged to the Palleschi, to the party which had caused her father and all the family an infinity of misery, and which had ever shown itself hostile to the ancient laws and liberties of Florence.

Was it to be supposed, then, that Niccolo would accept one of that faction for his son-in-law? Add to all this that Laodamia, by dexterously interrogating her brothers and various friends of the family, without letting her motives appear, had found out who he was, and had learnt respecting him many things that set him in no very favourable light; that his name was Troilus of the Ardinghelli, a creature of the Medici, and a dissipated courtier.

To these considerations, which had reference to family and party interests, was added another of an intimate and domestic nature. In the warehouse of Niccolo there was a young man, who from his childhood had been brought up in the family; his name was Lambert. His birth was humble, for his father had been a silk-weaver, who by his fidelity and good conduct had risen high in Niccolo's favour; so that from a poor operative, he had raised him till he made him the foreman of his business. This worthy man repaid with his life the obligations he owed to his benefactor.

When on the 6th of April, 1498, the enemies of Savonarola attacked the church and convent of St. Mark, very many of the Piagnoni, and amongst them Niccolo, with Piero, Lambert's father, assembled together, and took up a position within the walls to defend him. The contest lasted for many hours during the night; the assailants being numerous, and fighting with every species of arms, with stones and arquebusses; and those within, offering a most determined resistance; it was just like the storming of a citadel. The priests with the friars, after having walked in procession round the convent, withdrew into the church, and taking the Sacrament from its tabernacle, placed it on the altar: and then bending in prayer, they chanted all together: *Salvum fac populum tuum, Domine, et benedic hæreditati tuæ,* expecting martyrdom every moment. Although Savonarola would not consent to their using arms to defend him, father Dominic da Pescia, and many citizens of high rank, among whom were Francesco Valori, Battista Ridolfi, and T. Davanźati, united together, and resolved to repel their assailants by force of arms; for having burnt down the gate of the church, they had at last forced their way in, in a crowd, fighting most furiously, hand to hand, with the Piagnoni, and the friars; and the contest lasted several hours. A novice, of the name of Heinrich, a German, having mounted the pulpit with an arquebuss, killed many of the enemy, and every time he fired, he accompanied the action with the words: *Salvum fac populum tuum, Domine.* And a brother of the Biliotti, with a brazen crucifix, deprived Jacopo di Tanai, of an eye; these instances are mentioned merely to give an idea of those times.

Niccolo, who was then about fifty-eight, was seen fighting in the middle of the church, opposite the altar of the Virgin, and had at his side the trusty Piero, Lambert's father. The latter having noticed a man, who with a partisan was preparing to deal Niccolo, unawares, a blow that would have cut him in two, seeing no other way to save him, threw himself between them, and received the weapon on his breast, which came out at his back, and his blood bespattered Niccolo from head to foot. Some of the friars ran up, as was their custom, when they saw any one fall, and having raised up the wounded man carried him to the altar, where after receiving the communion with great joy, and thanking God for such a death, he turned his eyes to Niccolo, who was supporting his head, not without letting a tear fall over his faithful servant, and said:—

"I leave my beloved Nunziata, soon about to be a mother—may my son or daughter find a father in you." And without saying another word, he surrendered his soul to his Creator.

From that moment, as every one may imagine, he took the utmost care of Nunziata; and Lambert, who was born two months after, he ever treated as if he had been his own son. Finding that he was an apt scholar, he had him well instructed; so that, becoming clever at accounts, he was made Niccolo's clerk, with a good salary. Niccolo' thoughts, however, were constantly occupied, in devising how to settle him in life, and so to requite the great obligation he was under to his father.

Being a rich merchant, he might have said to Lambert, Take this sum of money, and set up a business of your own. But, in the first place, it appeared to him, that such obligations would be but poorly requited with mere money; on the other hand, having a numerous family, he considered that it would be hardly fair, to diminish his children's fortunes, for a matter that had reference to himself alone. The idea had struck him, to give Lambert one of his daughters, with a suitable dowry; and thus he would reconcile all difficulties. But though the young man, who was now more than twenty, was not one who would have to fear a refusal from any girl, Niccolo had too much wisdom and justice, to desire to set on foot such a connexion, without first knowing the heart and inclination of those who were to form it. To take the first steps and propose the matter himself, he did not think consistent with his self-respect; but as time went on, he hoped that some occasion or other would favour the fulfilment of his wishes.

That Niccolo designed to make Lambert his son-in-law, without caring about his lowly origin, could not surprise any one who knew them both. The old man was not one of those, who are opposed to the aristocracy, because they envy them, and who want to have them put down, in order to occupy their place. He held, that every man was the son of his own deeds; and he estimated every one by the measure of his own individual virtues, and therefore, always regarded, as detrimental to a state, those sects, whether they consisted of nobles, or plebeians, or merchants, or any other class, who forming themselves into a set, to the exclusion of all other citizens, and repudiating all intercourse with those who do not belong to their clique, seek by the use of violent means, and a haughty demeanour, to obtain honour, wealth, and power, not by any particular virtues residing in themselves, but merely by the accident of being born in their exclusive class, or being in any way connected with it. But how rare are the characters, who, like Niccolo, detest abuses only from a regard to equity and fairness, and not from any apprehension of their consequences to themselves, or from vexation, at not having themselves the power to oppress others.

Lambert, besides, would have deserved on his part, to be made an exception of, even by a father, who valued birth and riches, more highly than Niccolo did.

If my reader wants to form an idea of Lambert's personal appearance, let him imagine a tall youth, well adapted, by the harmonious proportion of his limbs, to acquire those arts which demand dexterity and strength. And that will suffice for his outward appearance. In his mental capacity, nature had endowed him with that gift which she reserves for her chief favourites,—for those whom, without any distinction of rank or fortune, she destines to great enterprises; a gift which may be described as the love of, or rather the thirsting aspiration after, perfection, the prolific source of glorious actions and sublime virtues, and of all that is elevated in human conduct. A severe judge, which whispers to the ear of him who is greeted with applause, "*You might have done more;*" a spur which constantly goads forward the man whose heart is sensitive to its touch, because in everything—in every action—he sees how much longer is the road that remains, in order to arrive at perfection, than the distance he has already traversed; the torment of the soul, and, at the same time, its life—the spring of unnumbered gratifications. May it not be the impress that remains in the soul of man, from that divine afflatus, by which God called him out of nothing?

This noble passion, which, in Lambert, was every day becoming more fervent with his advancing years, had urged him to profit most diligently by his good fortune, in being brought up in a family where all the means of education were within his reach, for the acquisition of those arts and exercises, which produce the most perfect development of the physical and moral qualities. With an instinctive foreboding, perhaps, that his life would not be entirely passed in a warehouse, he had striven to render himself equal to a more splendid career,—invigorating his health and strength by every species of martial exercise, in which he had succeeded in a wonderful degree, and improving his mind by the reading, principally, of the historians; with which, combining the discussions at which he was present in Niccolo's house, maintained by the statesmen who frequented it, he had gained a store of solid and various information; by which means, united with the habit he had acquired from infancy, of doing no action—forming no opinion—without having first bestowed the most careful reflection on it, he might be said to be a man, at an age in which many others are little more than children.

It is true, on the other hand, not to hide his defects, that, owing to that very desire for excellence and perfection, he was easily, and with incredible vehemence, carried away with those things and those persons whom he imagined to possess any great quality, and with a glowing fancy painted them with a much higher degree of excellence than they possessed; and when he afterwards discovered (as often happens) that he had been either wholly, or in part mistaken, he passed from immoderate admiration to immoderate aversion.

Nor will it be beside our purpose to observe, that if young men of ardent imaginations and generous hearts, like Lambert, could forearm their minds against this error of rash and inconsiderate judgments, they would avoid many mistakes; they would not have to charge themselves with many acts of injustice, and their consequent evils; and the feeling of disappointment that follows the dissipation of their illusions, would not inspire them with that blind and haughty contempt towards humanity, which has perhaps given birth to many fine poetical declamations, but has never rendered mankind more virtuous or more happy. Nay, it might be shown that it has, instead, rendered them less humane towards others, and more in love with themselves ; withholding from them the knowledge of a very ordinary truth, and one obvious to every well-regulated mind,—that, if in the world there are many knaves, there are also many good men ; and that the conduct of both, including even these fierce despisers of their species, is a mixture of good actions and indifferent ones ; so that all comes at last to this,—that we must have the divine patience to separate one kind from the other, praise what is good, censure what is bad ; pity mankind, who from their very nature are under the necessity of ever oscillating between right and wrong ; and, last of all, warn and assist them if possible, instead of vainly denouncing and vilifying them.

These reflections, however, would in fact have been of little service to Lambert. He had encountered but few sorrows, and had experienced, in the family of his protector, unnumbered kindnesses : his disposition, therefore, had not come under those hardening influences ; and, notwithstanding the defect we have attributed to him, his native equity, his simple and affectionate manners, and the tender gratitude he manifested towards Niccolo, had gained him the love of the old man, of his sons, and of all who knew him. There was in the family one who loved him, without perhaps being aware of it herself, with a different kind of affection from the rest ; and that person was—Laodamia.

In truth, if ever two hearts were formed to meet, they were theirs. But Lambert, though he felt himself attracted towards her by that sympathy which springs from similarity of character, was awed back by that chaste and virgin majesty that was so conspicuous in her, whereby he was led to look on himself as far beneath a being so lofty and divine. Seldom did he see her, and still seldomer did he speak to her; he even fancied that Laodamia had rather a dislike to him, and avoided him. The timid and simple youth said to himself, "Why, do I deserve a look from her?" But Niccolo's daughter was very far from slighting him, and avoided him only from that internal sense of shame, which was her guide.

Lisa, on the other hand, was just the reverse, in her intercourse with Lambert. She treated him with the easy confidence of one, who felt assured that he could not presume upon her familiar manner. The open and affectionate heart of Lambert was at that season of life, in which it as readily unfolds itself to love, as to the breath of a new life; in which its influence is felt, before it has found an object on which to repose; a period full of peril, of pain, of bliss, and trepidation; wherein the youthful heart is almost always caught in the first snare, and is attracted by the most alluring bait. At this crisis much depends on a single step!

The heart of this young man, who had not dared to raise his aspiring thoughts to Laodamia, turned to Lisa by degrees, without even being conscious of it, or intending it; and at last became fairly in love with her, centering in her alone his every thought, his every joy. That keen and subtle perception which nature has imparted to every female mind, and which precedes experience, told Lisa, young as she was, what the feelings of Lambert towards her were. She was pleased with the idea of feeling herself beloved; and what human heart is not, that is innocent and undepraved? But this pleasing sensation arose probably, in her case, more from self-love than from the heart. Entertaining a high idea of herself, this affection was chiefly valued by her as an additional proof of her own importance; though, in truth, she was fond of Lambert, and would probably have conceived for him a deep and passionate affection, but she could not for a moment imagine herself becoming the wife of a man, who passed his life with a yard-measure in his hand, serving out brocades.

Lambert, too, who, by nature, and from knowing himself to be a very humble individual, was somewhat diffident of himself, divining to some extent the maiden's ideas, was sometimes fairly out of heart and hope: at other times, finding that he was so graciously treated by Niccolo, and looked on as a son, he felt his courage revive. And the old man, who, as far as his numerous cares permitted, was intent on discovering the nature of Lisa's feelings for Lambert, feeling assured that a partiality existed between them for each other, desired, without manifesting it too openly, to let the young man know, that he would interpose no obstacle to their union.

At last, one day, when he was in the room alone with these two, Lisa by chance went out, and Lambert, not fancying he was observed, looked after her; and that look said quite enough. Niccolo, smiling, and placing his hand upon his head, said to him, "Lambert, there is no happiness in the world I do not wish for you, because I know you to be a thoroughly good lad; and be assured, that, in giving a husband to Lisa, I shall not consider whether he be rich or of high family, but only that he be a man of honour, and can find favour in her eyes;" and stopping a moment, and looking kindly on the youth, who had a face as red as fire, he repeated again,—"can find favour in her eyes: you understand me."

Niccolo left the room, and Lambert was still rubbing his eyes, and endeavouring to arouse himself, for it all appeared to him like a dream. At last, recovering himself, and wild with delight, he exclaimed, "Well, if I cannot win her now, I shall have no one to blame but myself." But to allay his happiness, the thought all at once suggested itself, of what he fancied he could detect in Lisa, that she was too proud to set her affections on a lowly object; and for the first time in his life, he repined at the obscurity and meanness of his birth; for the first time, he thought, with a sigh, "Oh! if I had been born a gentleman!"

But speedily, as if ashamed of these useless regrets, he said, musingly, " Am not I a man, then, and as good a one as anybody else ?" and with his glowing fancy he saw, as it were, pass in array before him, all who in Italy had, by their virtues, risen from a lowly condition to rank and power. He recalled what he had read of Castruccio, of Uguccione della Faggiuola, of Sforza, and Carmagnola, and many others; and applying to himself that passage from the *Purgatorio* of Dante, he exclaimed, " I, too, am of that country—

> ' Where a great Marcellus 's made
> Of every petty factious villager.* ' "

Passing from one idea to another, he still further confirmed himself in these thoughts with the following reflections: " Niccolo, it is true, would give Lisa to me, because I am the son of one who sacrificed his life for him ; but he will not, on that account, fail to remember that I am the son of a poor operative, and that he could, if he would, give Lisa to the first man in Florence, and that that man would consider it a great distinction."

The mind of Lambert, with a generous pride, spurned the idea that his benefactor—that Lisa—should never have cause to be proud of him ; and warming with these reflections, he already seemed to see Laodamia the wife of some great man, and this new kinsman ashamed of the poor silk-weaver; and, whilst his friends and their connexions would disdain him, and his Lisa (according to his usual way, he depicted her to himself as all perfection), hurt by these slights passed upon him, would attempt to defend him, and endeavour to be his mainstay and protector! This idea distressed him so severely, and the thought of passing such a life appeared so wretched and mean a fate, that, with a sudden resolution, he determined to attempt at all hazards that career in life, which he felt conscious he was capable of.

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* Canto vi. 125, *Cary's Trans.*

Full of high hope, he saw all at once a new scene present itself before his eyes, crowded and glittering with feats of arms, with adventures, and with glory. At the end of this bright vista, he saw himself renowned as a warrior, the lord of a castle, honoured and powerful, and Lisa receiving homage as a princess—the envy of all her friends and companions. Intoxicated with these seducing images—feeling himself vigorous in mind and body, and fit for anything—he cried out, as if ashamed at not having had such thoughts before, " A glorious thing, truly, that I have at last come to feel that I have a heart and an arm equal to any man's!"—and he added, " If God help me as I will help myself, Niccolo shall have no cause to blush for his son-in-law, nor Lisa to envy any other high-born lady."

The design of Lambert in proposing to follow the profession of arms, was not in that age unattended with the probability, that he might rise to a splendid position, provided that he who entered upon such a career possessed, in a more than ordinary degree, the qualities requisite for success, and that a cannon ball did not prematurely interrupt his design. The custom still prevailed in the warfare of those times, for individuals to take the rank of independent chiefs, and any man was free to do so, if only he could gain such a reputation among men of arms, that any considerable number of them were willing to accept him as their captain. Every soldier who adopted the profession, both with a view to enrich himself and as a means of gaining rank and position, flocked to the standard of the chief, under whom they promised themselves the most splendid success; whilst he, accepting or refusing their proffered services according to the best of his judgment, could form a select band; and this method of forming an army had this advantage, that no one who was not personally brave and had had great experience in military matters, ever attained a supreme command.

But at the very moment of putting his resolutions into effect, a thought presented itself to his mind which, if it were not an insuperable obstacle, was at least a difficulty, and one which is ever the greater, the more excellent is the character of him who encounters it. Lambert still had a mother. This worthy person, before her marriage, was a goodly country-woman of Lucca, and, having come to Florence with Piero, had lived with him many years before the birth of Lambert. To her might be applied the eulogy contained in the four words, which supplied the epitaph of an ancient Roman lady—

DOMUM MANSIT:
LANAM FECIT.*

But I fancy I hear some of my fair readers—if I have the good fortune to have any—say with a smile, "What! are we poor women good for nothing else but to stay at home and spin wool?"

Ah, my dear young ladies (for I suppose we are agreed on this point, not to take the words of the epitaph in their strictly literal sense), I wish you did but know how great, how noble, how important in my eyes, the office assigned you by Providence in this world renders you! If what is truly beautiful and truly great—if, in a word, what is really important—is to be estimated by utility and virtue, who can be considered as more important than a good wife, a good mother? Who directs the first steps, who assuages the early sorrows, of proud man—who, when grown up, holds you as his inferior, and yet must come back to you, if he would find solace amid the miseries of life? Who, like you, can live a life of constant self-denial, and sacrifice herself entirely to the welfare and happiness of him to whom you have given your love? With men, acts of heroism are always sustained by praises and applause; with you, on the contrary, whatever human virtue can effect that is great and arduous, for the most part remains concealed and forgotten within the recesses of home.

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* She lived at home: She spun wool.

And if, notwithstanding, you are virtuous and good, what greater glory, what higher merit?

Oh, if you did but know how much the well-being of human society is in your power, since everything depends on the virtue of families! Did you but know how much rests with you, to render men generous, brave, and patriotic—to make them humane, energetic, wise, gentle, and courteous—you would not envy our sex the mournful privilege of slaying men in battle, or of destroying them with drugs and simples, which are the two approved methods of sending them to the other world; of tormenting them, or ruining them with law and litigation, and a thousand other ills; of distorting their judgments, and beguiling them with books and sophistry—and God grant that the fair reader may not add something out of her own mind to this list—and of making them yawn with stories like the present! But I will not suppose her ungrateful; for if the female sex is not on my side, there is no more hope.

Now let us return to Lambert's mother.

CHAPTER IX.

NUNZIATA had ever been, not only a chaste and faithful wife, (which, if it is sufficient for a husband's honour, is not for his happiness,) but had managed, within the narrow limits of a poor home, to be frugal, without being penurious; taking care that her husband and her little maid should want for nothing, and might even appear decently clad, according to their station. Besides this, at the end of every year, she found means to lay by a little money against unforeseen accidents. When the wages, which Piero received from Niccolo, did not supply all their wants, she strove to make it up with the labour of her wheel, which she kept going all day, and sometimes part of the night; so that the neighbours, when they were chiding their restless and fidgetty children, used to say to them: "Thou seem'st like Nunziata's wheel."

It is true, that the good woman, conscious of her excellent domestic regulations, grumbled a bit, when there appeared any signs of insubordination among her subjects. But as both subjects and government were, in the main, of one mind, and on all essential points mutually satisfied, it happened in Piero's family, as it does in England, where, if contentions sometimes spring up, yet no one wishes to push matters to such extremities, as to overturn the state. If the comparison is somewhat unsuitable by reason of the difference of the two subjects, in point of magnitude, yet their relative importance is pretty much the same; therefore we pray the reader to allow it to pass.

So long as Piero lived, things had gone on much in this way. After his death, Niccolo had, in due time, taken the little Lambert into his house, and settled Nunziata in a small cottage, that belonged to him, not far off, at the back of San Lorenzo; where this worthy woman, as her years advanced and the infirmities of age stole upon her, was able to relax the labour of her wheel, owing to the assistance received from Niccolo; by which, indeed, she might be said to live entirely. Her cottage consisted only of a single room, and a small kitchen; but, as Nunziata had ever been remarkable for her order and cleanliness, she kept it as tidy and neat as a polished mirror. On her bed, which was always made without a rumple, flowers were strewn according to the custom in Florence; affixed to the wall were many little emblems of devotion, the olive branch, the consecrated palm, madonnas and images of the saints. On the other side of the room was a shelf, on which were ranged tin and earthenware utensils, as bright as silver, and between them were placed boughs of laurel; a table, a chair or two, and her wheel, the inseparable companion of her whole life, and here you have a picture of Nunziata's room. Her figure was slight and spare, as she had undergone too much toil to admit of her ever becoming fat; her dress was coarse, but neat, and without a spot.

This goodly old dame lived happy in her little cottage, with no other company, but that of a black tom-cat; who might rather be called a companion than an inferior, to see its manners at dinner and supper. She cooked for herself, and was her own servant; only that the neighbours, now and then, on account of her age and infirmities, fetched her the water she required, from a feeling of kindliness, and not for reward; as the poor in general (listen, ye rich and great!) when they cannot help with their substance, do so by their service.

In her solitude, which was seldom interrupted, the good woman had, however, one anxious, constant subject of her thoughts; and that was her son. From the time that she brought him up, through the years of his infancy, his boyhood and his youth, she had striven, by all the means which her love suggested, to give him such guidance, that he might, above all things, start in life with good and honourable principles, and so enjoy all the happiness, that was compatible with his humble fortune. So that when she saw him established in the Lapi family, it seemed to her that all her cares and thoughts had, at any rate, been of some use; and now she was especially anxious that Lambert, by his behaviour, might go on every day improving his advantageous prospects. When, lo and behold, one day he confided to his mother his love for

Lisa, and the hopes he cherished! His good mother, who could not imagine in all the world beside, any family so great, so rich, and powerful as that of the Lapi; who had fancied it was touching the clouds with her finger, when she saw her son appointed to fill a situation but little higher than that of a servant, and knowing besides Lisa's ambitious and wayward temper, was perfectly horrified, afraid that her son would be likely, with his presumptuous love, to excite the displeasure of Niccolo, and utterly ruin his prospects; in consequence, she proceeded to point out to him the danger of such ideas, and earnestly entreated him to turn his mind from such fancies; and said with a sigh, "If you had set your love on Laodamia, she, my son, might do; though, even she is far above one of your condition. Think on what I say, Lambert!"

Nunziata, like all women advanced in years, who from passing their time alone, if they have any subject that excites their apprehensions, by dint of dwelling much on it, put themselves quite in a quandary, and represent the matter to themselves a thousand times more terrible and dangerous than it really is, lived now in a state of the greatest anxiety for her son; and whenever he came to pass an hour or two with her, endeavoured by such arguments and endearments, as a fond mother so readily devises, to inspire him with those counsels which she thought were for his good.

Matters were at this pass, when the conversation of Niccolo with Lambert changed the young man's hope into certainty, and prompted him to adopt the resolution, to which we have adverted. But how tell it to his mother? How part from her, and perhaps for ever? How say to her, an aged and infirm woman, and the fondest of mothers:—*I am going to leave you, and am going for a soldier?* Lambert, although much perplexed with these thoughts, did not despair. He knew that his mother, like all females of the sixteenth century, was accustomed to the idea, that it was a brave and manly thing, at times, to take arms; and that to dissuade their husbands or sons, when they had an honourable cause to sustain, was an ignoble and pusillanimous act. Indeed, Nunziata, bred up in troubled and stormy times, had, both by what she had seen, and by the conversations she had constantly heard, long accustomed her mind to brave thoughts and bold deeds; so that when Lambert, after having repeated to her Niccolo's words, opened his whole heart to her, telling her all he was bent on accomplishing, with all the arguments and considerations that he had long pondered in his heart, though at first, it appeared she could not bring herself to make such a sacrifice, yet by little and little she began to show herself, if not willing, at any rate resigned to her son's plans. She was poor, and had no learning; but she was capable of those generous sentiments, which flourish in a noble heart, even without the assistance of books. Her first fear over, when she considered the matter more calmly, she was pleased with the determination of Lambert, not to accept such a piece of good fortune, without rendering himself worthy of it. She felt an honourable pride in thinking that her son would become the son-in-law of one of the first citizens of Florence, without being altogether beholden to his kindness for it; that to the man from whom they had received such continual favours, without ever being able to make the least return, it would be possible at last in some way to make amends, or at any rate to prove to him, that every effort had been used to do so; so that if he failed, it must be attributed to his misfortune, and not to a base and ungrateful nature. In fine, the departure of Lambert was resolved on with mutual good will.

Whilst he was secretly occupied in equipping himself with clothes, with arms, and other necessary appurtenances, partly by his own means, and partly with money furnished him by his mother; who, in this emergency, readily gave up to him all her savings during so many years; an expression that he overheard from Lisa, confirmed him still more in his resolution, and hastened the execution of it. He heard her one day talking with her brothers, about a young man, who was a relation of the family, and of his intention of pursuing the study of the law, when she exclaimed, "For my part, I don't think anybody a man, whom I don't see mounted on a horse, and a steel cuirass on his breast." These words sounded in Lambert's ear, as if she had said to him:—"*Now if you wish for me, you know what you have to do.*"

Two days after, at early dawn, the youth, equipped from head to foot, knocked at his mother's door, to take his farewell, and receive her blessing. The reader will easily imagine the actions and expressions of both, without our minutely describing them. When the moment came for them to part, the poor old woman, pressing her son's head between her thin and trembling hands, as he knelt on the ground, kissed him on the forehead, and gave him her blessing; then, placing round his neck a brazen crucifix, she said to him, "Never omit to wear this; it will bring you success;" and Lambert set out. But before taking the direction of the Porta San Gallo, which was his intended road, he turned his horse, and stopped at the great gate of Niccolo's mansion.

Hitherto, he had never been able to summon up courage to speak boldly and without hesitation to Lisa; but now, the moment of separation, and the resolution he had taken, rendered him fearless; the very arms which he wore, he now fancied had changed him into quite another man; and perhaps (for he was but a youth!) he was delighted to let Lisa see him, all resplendent with his glittering armour, and thought to himself,—when I shall be far away, and she calls me to mind, she will see me with my sword and shield, and not with that cursed yard measure, and those infernal brocades.

He dismounted, and hastily ascended the stairs to the topmost story. Lisa, who was already risen, was out on the terrace, watering her flowers, before the sun had risen.

The words that passed were few and rapidly uttered.

"If I return," said Lambert, standing about two paces from the maiden, and with his hands brought together in a supplicating attitude, "If I return, I shall be worthy of you; if I do not, you will understand, that your Lambert has lost his life, in the attempt to become so. Should that be the case, will you remember me? If heaven reserves me for a happier fate, will you consent to wait for me?"

Lisa was supporting herself against the railing of the balcony; for his sudden appearance, his arms, the young man's words, at once solemn and tender, had so agitated her, that her knees quite trembled. Her vision was clouded by a flood of tears, and she replied in an under tone, turning away her head: "Yes, poor Lambert!" She then reached her hand to a vase of roses in full flower, and taking one, gave it to Lambert, and hastily retired into her room.

The next minute Lambert was in the street; the motion occasioned by mounting his horse, caused the rose to shed its leaves, and a light wind that was blowing, dispersed them in all directions. Lambert, sorely distressed, saw them fly away on the light and tremulous wings of the breeze, scattering themselves on all sides. He placed the stalk, and green leaves which remained, with a sigh in his bosom, and pushed forward on his road with a saddened heart; thinking on his rose, which had lasted so short a time.

Let us not deride him, poor fellow! When the heart is similarly circumstanced, a trifle is sufficient to distress, as well as to console it!

Lisa, in the mean time, had informed her sister of the matter, and soon Niccolo and her brothers were made acquainted with the departure of Lambert. Going up into his room, they found on the table a letter directed to Niccolo. In it, the young man, after warmly thanking him for all the kindness he had received from him, and requesting his pardon, for having set out without taking leave, and receiving from Niccolo, as from a father, his blessing, he unfolded his entire plan; telling him, that notwithstanding the deep love he cherished for Lisa, and notwithstanding his own gracious words, yet, that he was not so blinded by his affection, as not to know how inferior he was to the high position which he had permitted him to aspire to; that he should have deemed it a mean and base piece of conduct, and an unworthy requital of all his kindness, to avail himself, at once, of the generous offer made to him by Niccolo, in consequence of his kindly feeling towards himself; that he was now going to exert all the energies of his mind, and all the powers of his body, in order to prove to the world that, if he was of lowly and humble origin, he yet had sentiments and feelings that were worthy of a more exalted fate. He entreated Lisa to cherish, in some slight degree, the memory of one who ardently loved her, and to wait for him a few years; as, he hoped, before many had passed, that he should let her hear such tidings of him, as that she should have to say: *Lambert is now a man.*

Under these last words he drew a line, alluding to the words he had heard Lisa make use of.

Niccolo, with his high spirit, fond of brave characters, remained fixed in admiration at the resolution that Lambert had taken; and, however much he might regret the separation, he felt as if he could not sufficiently praise the high and generous sentiments he had shown. And Lisa reflecting, that solely for love of her, he had gone to encounter so many dangers and hardships, caught on the weak side of her heart, seemed to grow greater in her own eyes, and felt that she might well be proud of such a lover.

With all girls of Lisa's character, it is very rare that vanity, when gratified, does not open the door to love; and in those first moments, hearing him regretted and praised by all, she thought she loved him; and, perhaps, really did. When asked by Niccolo in the warmth of her first feelings, she replied she would gladly wait for his return; and in her inexperience and simplicity, she already fancied she saw him coming back the master of a kingdom.

Would you now know, O reader, who it was that put it into Niccolo's mind, to say what he did to Lambert? It was the amiable Laodamia, who, aware of his passion, and considering him a prize for her sister, had, with that celestial goodness which belonged to her, soon cancelled, or at least, locked up in the deepest recesses of her heart every thought of herself, in order to bestow all her attention on the welfare of Lambert and Lisa. The former from this moment she loved, as if he had been a brother. So true is it, that in this world, there sometimes live concealed in some unknown spot heroic souls, by the side of which an Alexander, a Cæsar, and others like them, are but a poor and miserable race! And the difference is easily understood; the latter tormented others, to gratify themselves; the former torment themselves, to gratify others.

A year had passed away since Lambert's departure; nor, except from a single letter, in which he informed them that he was in the pay of Filippino Doria, and was serving on board his galleys, had they been able to learn any further tidings of him. They began to doubt whether some misfortune might not have befallen him; and in Lisa's heart his image was gradually wearing out by distance, by the uncertainty that hung over the future, but more than all, because the image of Troilus was beginning to occupy its place. One may easily imagine whether it pained the excellent Laodamia, to see the noble Lambert, whom her heart had so well understood and appreciated, and whom yet she had renounced with so much virtuous self-sacrifice, in order to render her sister happy; that Lambert, who had left country, relatives, friends and home, and had shown such elevation of mind for love of her: to see him, I say, forgotten so soon for a coxcomb, for a parasitical courtier, for one of that party which had occasioned to Florence and her family so many miseries. Laodamia was jealous for Lambert's honour, and she could not bear to see such wrong done him; this, indeed, was the chief reason why the conduct of her sister so displeased her; and, no longer able to control her feelings, and look on in silence, one evening about dusk, at that hour which, more than all others, may be called the season of confidence, being alone with her in her room, she took hold of her hand, and said almost with tears—"Oh Lisa! and poor Lambert too!—his faith—his love!—have you forgotten him entirely?"

To these words Lisa made but a short answer, and in an abrupt and haughty tone. Laodamia said no more; she went out of the room, and when she found herself alone, she gave way to a flood of tears, like those which are shed, when we are constrained to confess of the fancied virtues and good qualities of some one we love—I have been mistaken!

But the time soon came, when that coldness which she felt towards her, vanished, and changed into compassion and tenderness, more heartfelt and deeper than ever.

Towards the end of May, Niccolo went with his family to a country-house that he had near Poggio-a-Caiano, the estate of the Medici. He and his sons visited Florence continually for their business, so that the two sisters were frequently left alone, with an old servant called Mona Fede, a good sort of person, but credulous and foolish; one more so there could hardly be.

One morning, Laodamia, who used to sleep with Lisa, waking about sunrise, missed her sister from her side. Thinking she might have gone down into the garden to enjoy the fresh air, she went to see if she could find her there; but no Lisa was there, nor the old servant either, so that she knew not what to think. After a while they both appeared, but they seemed confused and agitated, and, in reply to the questions addressed to them, gave rambling and incoherent answers. Laodamia began to be afraid; and her sister going to her room, she asked her in great trepidation, what had taken her so early abroad this morning, and why she was so confused and excited. The poor girl, no longer able to bear up, burst into tears, and throwing herself on her neck, she said: "I am his wife!"

Laodamia, on hearing these terrible words, which sounded in her ears like a warning voice, foretelling interminable miseries, could scarcely draw her breath, and covering her face with her hands, could only say, "Wretched girl, what have you done!"

Seeing that for the present she could gain no further information from her sister, she ran to the servant to get an explanation, and with words that expressed the distress of her mind, at one time entreating, at another scolding, at last made the old woman say something; who, amazed beyond measure at seeing Laodamia take on so for this business, kept saying, that Troilus was certainly a fine gentleman, and a great match for Lisa, and that if he had a mind to do things in that secret way, there was no need with gentlefolks to be so very nice and precise, as they too had their fancies, and that Niccolo at last would have no reason to complain; and other similarly ridiculous things.

In a word, the deed was done; and the shameful and dishonourable mode of it, the reader already knows; but none of the females were aware of that part; so little, indeed, that the old servant, in order the more to quiet Laodamia's mind, particularly dwelt on the ceremony, extolling the courtesy of the bridegroom, and declaring that it had all been done according to due form, in the church, by the priest, with proper witnesses, etc.; so that the noble-minded girl, feeling that nothing was more vain and useless than to yield to sorrow, where the misfortune had no remedy, adopted the wise resolution, to direct all her care towards the prevention of its sad consequences. Her first thought, and the advice she gave Lisa, was to throw herself at once at the feet of her father, and confess all to him; but she had not courage to follow it. Seldom are they, to whom such advice is needful, capable of putting it into execution; they hope to conceal their first fault by dissimulation: but that evil which, when known, soon admits of a remedy, remaining unknown, becomes incurable. If Lisa had attended to her sister, she would have had, without doubt, to encounter the first outburst of Niccolo's fury; but then, her father, insisting on having the proofs of the validity of her marriage, would have discovered the vile imposture that lurked beneath the whole transaction; the remedy would have been easy, and ere it was too late, and the unhappy Lisa would not have been undone. But let us narrate our story in its due order.

The human heart is so overlaid with selfishness, that even the most noble spirits, partially at least, are subject to it. Laodamia, on hearing of her sister's condition, could not for a moment suppress the thought—then Lambert is free!—But she was so pained at having allowed such a thought, it appeared to her such a mean and detestable thing, to derive a hope of happiness for herself from the fault of her sister, that in her innocent simplicity she looked on herself with horror, as a wretch, and wept bitterly. She redoubled her tenderness to Lisa, and felt as if this increased kindness made her heart lighter, considering it as a sort of amends, for the wrong she conceived she had done her. With the hope that time would furnish a favourable opportunity for giving a better turn to things, she determined as the best course, since she was at any rate Troilus's wife, to assist her in keeping this union concealed, and to facilitate her interviews, from time to time, with her husband.

So matters went on for several months, with little pleasure, however, to poor Lisa, who could see him very seldom, owing to the constraint of her home. But, from being compelled to stifle her anguish, and to live in constant apprehension, she had become thin and wasted, she had lost her youthful bloom, and appeared no longer the girl she once was. The fading of her beauty gave her the greater pain, inasmuch as she thought she perceived in Troilus a degree of coolness; whilst she loved him more devotedly every day. At first, when he was unable to obtain an interview with her, he would yet get sight of her in the street, at church, or wherever it was possible; but soon she perceived that he was gradually relaxing in these marks of tender devotion. The poor girl began to feel, as was natural, distressed by surmises; thoughts of jealousy, the more tormenting, as she had no means of ascertaining their truth, began to rise in her heart, and altogether she passed a wretched and miserable existence, and reaped, only too soon, the bitter fruits of the fault she had committed.

But the unhappy girl was scarcely at the begining of her sorrows. She became aware, in a manner that left no room for doubt, that soon she would not be alone in bearing the punishment of her error. That moment, looked forward to with anxiety, indeed, but full of such a new kind of delight, of such trembling solicitude for young brides, was, to poor Lisa, like the announcement of some terrible calamity. And here too, were new motives for concealment, and new difficulties in effecting it; an increase of present sufferings, and of fears for the future.

It is useless to dwell minutely on the means adopted by both the sisters, to conceal in her first days of pain and anguish, first the mother and next the child. Experience has often shown that cases similar to this may happen, and be kept secret and unknown, even in families where a mother's watchful eye presides: in the house of the Lapi, therefore, it was not very difficult to conceal the matter from Niccolo, who was a thousand miles off having any such suspicions, his thoughts absorbed about the city and his business, frequently away from home, and when there, always shut up in his own room on the ground floor.

But this secret, so carefully and so long kept, was very nearly being divulged by Lisa herself. For all that Laodamia and the old servant besought her, she could not be persuaded to separate from her baby, in order to put it under the care of a nurse. In a disposition more docile, this love, though noble and virtuous, would have yielded to the plea of absolute necessity; but Lisa was selfwilled, and meeting with opposition, she persisted in maintaining her will with such earnestness and such pertinacity, that fearing for her life in those moments of weakness, it was necessary to yield in order to pacify her. But in that case, it became necessary to take another female into their confidence. Under pretext that they wanted an extra servant to look after the clothes, they took into the house a young woman from a distant quarter of the city, who, coming there with Lisa's baby, was thought to be its mother, and it was supposed necessary for her to suckle it.

As there were none but men in the house, whose thoughts ran entirely on other matters, this too succeeded very well. Niccolo, indeed, and some of the sons, hearing now and then the infant's cries upstairs, said to the girls, "What in the world have you brought this nuisance into the house for? Is there such a lack of females in Florence?" But the matter soon passed over. The men had their say, and the women their way, as is generally the case in families, when there is a discussion on domestic matters between the male and female part of the household.

Troilus, in the meantime, notwithstanding the expulsion of the Medici and the present depression of the Palleschan party, had remained in Florence, with a good many of the same faction, and continued to maintain himself there, in order to be ready, if opportunity should offer, to assist his masters, the Medici, and their party.

When the generals of Charles Vth. openly prepared to assail Florence, the suspicions of the government increasing, and, in consequence, showging itself more and more severe against the abettors of the exiled family, many of the Palleschi thought it high time to decamp. Lisa's betrayer having also secretly withdrawn from the city, made his way to the camp of the Imperialists, which was concentrating at Fuligno. He either could not, or would not, give any intimation of it to Lisa before he left Florence; he wrote to her, however, just to console and quiet her. It was not, he wrote, the duty of a loyal and honourable knight to break his oath to his liege lords, and abandon them in their adverse fortune; that she should keep a good heart, take care of her health, and of their little Arrigo, and hope for better times; then followed protestations of love, and oaths of eternal fidelity, &c.

How far these declarations were sincere at the time, it is difficult to judge, since even contrary results are not always a sufficient reason for asserting, that they were made with an intention of not observing them. However, the fact was, that ever after that letter, whether Troilus did not wish to be suspected by his party, in consequence of even appearing to keep up a correspondence with any one in Florence, or whether every sentiment of honour, of integrity, and of pity for his victim, were really extinguished in his heart, she had neither letter nor token more to give her any tidings of him; and whether, in consequence, she lived wretched and disconsolate, one may easily imagine. Only after a period of two months, when the enemy were encamped beneath the walls of Florence, she learnt, by means of some prisoners, that Troilus was in the camp, and was serving on the staff of the Prince of Orange.

Then at last the wretched girl began to open her eyes, and discover for a certainty, that Troilus was false to her, as he was to his country. "To be so near," she thought, "and not send me a line, not a word of message! Ah! if I were where he is! Were I in his place, I should soon find the means to do it!"

Laodamia, who had felt the same fears even before her sister, tried, however, to conceal them, and to excuse her supposed relative; and sometimes, hurried along by what she fondly hoped might be the truth, she could not bring herself to believe him so consummate a villain, and so abandoned a wretch. Though she was mistaken on this point indeed, since it is impossible to conceive more detestable villainy than what he had been guilty of in his betrayal of Lisa; yet perhaps he was not in his natural disposition so abandoned a villain, and probably may have possessed the germs of many virtues, had not vain-glory, of all vices the most perilous, stifled and suffocated them. This passion, the most credulous, and at the same time the most false, leads men straight to the very reverse of what it professes; and especially seizes on light and frivolous minds. Troilus, unhappily for him, had been under the dominion of this passion from his childhood; and mixing early in the company of men, among whom vice was praised, and virtue scorned, he gave himself up to the former, not so much from his own natural inclination, as from vain-gloriousness. The betrayal of Lisa was commenced and prosecuted by him, that he might have to boast of his success. True it is, that at the outset he loved her, or rather (not to profane the word), her beauty had pleased his eye, and perhaps if left to himself and his own reflections, he would never have gone so far in deceiving her; but laughed at by his comrades, who ridiculed his scruples with respect to a plebeian, a daughter of a Piagnone too, he heartlessly sacrificed to a miserable vanity the honour of that poor girl, and the peace of an excellent and worthy family.

Now that the reader is acquainted with the details of her sad fate, let us return to the point at which we left Niccolo sitting with his friends, in the manner we described at the commencement of the preceding chapter.

CHAPTER X.

Having terminated the discussion in which he was engaged in an under-tone with Castiglione, the conversation became general, and turned upon the affairs of the government, and on the resolutions to be adopted; as here, under the direction of the brothers of St. Mark's and of Niccolo, they were concerted, as it were, in anticipation of the public deliberations.

As we mentioned in chapter five, Cocchi had had his head cut off for some inconsiderate expressions in favour of the Medici. Ficino Ficini, who had fallen into the same error, was imprisoned, placed on the rack, and condemned to the same punishment. The sentence was ordered to be carried out at that very hour, in the court-yard of the prison, by torch-light; and the discourse of Bernardo and Niccolo had been respecting this man's fate. After a while, an officer of the Seigniory rang at the gate; he was admitted, and having come into the room, he addressed himself to Niccolo, and said—

"His highness, the Gonfalonier, informs you, that this moment Ficino's head has been cut off; he died as a good Christian."

"Very well," replied the old man, without any sign of emotion; and the officer went out. But those who were present, and especially the girls, shuddered at the announcement, and all eagerly asked, at once, the cause of this execution.

"An enemy less to the country," replied Niccolo: "he dared publicly to say, that Florence had been better under the Medici than under the Republic; the man who shows himself a traitor in his words, are we to wait till he proceeds to deeds?"

All, with downcast eyes, remained silent. Father Benedict alone looked upward with a suppressed sigh. The two girls, dropping their hands on their work, cast a terrified glance first at one, and then at another of the party. Ferruccio, removing from the fireplace, and throwing himself on a seat, exclaimed—

"Had we have crushed the serpent's head, as they are now trying to crush the tail, the city would not be at its present pass. But ofttimes men pay for their faults with their life, and the people with their liberty. If, when Charles came down into Italy in '94, Piero and his friends,—and if, three years ago, Hippolytus and Alexander had been, not merely driven out, but crushed and annihilated, the blood of many would have been spared, by shedding that of a few. The Pisans call us blind, in reference to the columns at St. John's. They have other and better reasons for calling us so! We could not see, that for the

Medici, the safest place of exile is in San Lorenzo.[*]

At the stern words of Ferruccio, which had indeed some truth in them, all remained pensive and silent for some minutes. It was now about the hour at which, according to custom, the evening prayer was said. Niccolo rose up and turned to Bindo, who, understanding the signal, went out, and presently brought in a number of operatives and shopmen in the service of Niccolo, who were always present at these prayers, and who knelt silently and reverently by the door. The old man drew forth from a chest a prayer-book, and handing it to father Zaccaria, said to him, "More than once in happier times than these, the glorious Savonarola said the office which you are about to do. How often here, in this room, did he say to us, 'My son, the scourge will light on you, you must suffer and contend, but afterwards, *Florentia renovabitur*.' The first part of the prophecy is fulfilled; let us now beseech him to obtain for us from God the fulfilment of the second; may this people obtain liberty and peace, and may he, who fights in their cause, gain a glorious victory, or meet an honourable death."

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[*] The tombs of the Medici family were in this Church.

Ferruccio alludes to some porphyry columns given by the Pisans to the Florentines. "In the polished surface of these magic columns," said the Saracen slaves, who assisted in bringing them to Pisa from Majorca, where the Pisans had obtained them, "are to be seen all treasons and machinations against the state which possesses them." The Pisans, fearing this might be true, before they sent them to Florence, according to an engagement they were under so to do, passed them through the fire, and so destroyed their lustre; and, in consequence, sent them done up in scarlet cloth. They were afterwards placed at one of the gates of the Baptistery of St. John.—Vide *Napier's Hist.* vol. i. ch. vi. p. 100.—TRANS.

"*Amen*," replied father Zaccaria. He took the book, and kneeling down before the niche, in which stood the ashes of Savonarola, the rest knelt around the table. After the usual prayers, he prayed for the souls of those who had already fallen during the siege, and more particularly for that of Baccio. Niccolo,, at the mention of his son, was seen to join his hands in an attitude of fervent supplication, and raise his eyes to heaven, full of calm resignation.

Father Zaccaria, partly from the words uttered a little before by the old man, and partly at the sight of Savonarola's tunic, on which he fixed his eyes, felt rising in his heart, more and more fervid, the thoughts of God and his country. By constant practice, he had acquired great readiness in speaking without premeditation, as no one at that period had received from nature, in a greater degree than he, the animated and impassioned eloquence of the time, and a disposition to use it. Towards the close of the prayers the sound of his voice became gradually louder; and when he had ended, without turning round or breaking off, he continued:

"No, your words shall not be scattered to the winds, O glorious Savonarola, and the enemies of him who trusts in God shall become dust and ashes: *Exsurgat Deus, et dissipentur inimici ejus!* Behold, already thy prophetic words are accomplished! The hand of God now presses heavily on unhappy Florence. It is now time to cry aloud to God, to sprinkle ourselves with ashes, to have recourse to penitence. It is now time to arm ourselves with constancy and fortitude, so that the mercy may not fail, even as the scourge has not. Let us turn to our only king, the Lord Jesus Christ.* Remember, let us say, that this people has chosen thee for their sole king. Thou seest that thine enemies are already coming to take from thee thy kingdom, to seat themselves on thy glorious throne; be a shield to this people, who wish to belong to none other but thee. Art not thou that jealous God, strong and mighty, who wast angry with Israel when they demanded a king? Art not thou he, who said to Samuel the prophet: *Non enim te abjecerunt sed me, ne regnem super eos?* Art not thou the same God, who, willing to show to the ungrateful Hebrews a last act of mercy, saidst to them by the mouth of the prophet: *Et constituet sibi tribunos et centuriones, et aratores agrorum tuorum, et messores segetum, et fabros armorum et curruum suorum. Filias quoque vestras faciet sibi unguentarias, &c.* These (he continued) are Thy threats against those who will withdraw themselves from Thy rule and dominion. Be Thou then judge, Thou Most High, between Thee and Thy people, and if they fight, that they may be in subjection to Thee only, and that they may not bow the knee to Dagon and Belial, do Thou fight with us. Save us from the sword of the Amorites and the Amalekites: *Exsurge, exsurge, Domine*;—and let thy enemies and ours be scattered."

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* This was not a mere figure of speech; since, immediately on the expulsion of the Medici, in 1527, a resolution was carried in the Great Council to create Jesus Christ king of the Florentines.

These words, uttered in a tone almost prophetic, and powerfully exciting, because coming from one who believed and felt them himself, drew from those who were present a murmur of approbation. Niccolo, who still felt glowing in his veins the ardour of thirty, when his country and the Palleschi were spoken of, seized Ferruccio by the arm, and said sternly: "No, by Heaven, those accursed people shall not enter Florence; and whilst you live, my brave youths, whilst I live, the balls of the Medici shall not displace the Florentine lily. For our enemies without the walls, the sword; for those within, the axe. Well did Savonarola instruct us, in the conspiracy of Bernardo del Nero, how to rid ourselves of traitors. They have demanded war to the death; let them have it, and their accursed blood fall on their own heads."

"War to the death," fiercely shouted Ferruccio, "enmity and eternal malediction to all the Palleschi! Would that I could with this (striking the hilt of his sword) cleave the heart of every one of them, whether in the city or out of it!"

Niccolo, his sons, and Castiglione, replied to these words of blood with a stern smile. The good father Benedict thought to himself with a sigh, In what woeful times is it my lot to live! Father Zaccaria had scarcely, by a first movement of his features, testified approval, when, suddenly changing countenance, he lowered his eyelids, and was silent.

But the one who felt his words most deeply, as a stab to her heart, was poor Lisa, who, contracting her eyebrows angrily towards Ferruccio, was about to say: One may be a good citizen without the heart and language of an executioner. But the angelic Laodamia, who read her heart, knowing what pain such discourse must give to her feelings, and how likely she was, if she attempted to reply to it, to fall into some imprudence, summoned up courage, and interrupted the conversation by saying, in her gentle way, all sweetness:—

"Signor Ferruccio, I too love my country, and hold myself a good patriot; I too hope that your good swords, by the favour of God, which he promises to the cause of justice, will save our country from the dominion of the Medici, and that of every other tyrant; but, if I think it lawful for a Christian to wish to be freed from his oppressor; if I think it allowable, or rather a sacred duty, to repel the enemies of my country with wounds and death, yet I find not that our divine Redeemer has permitted us to hate them, to rejoice over their sufferings, to exult in their death, from the mere pleasure of revenge. Do you never say the *Pater noster*, Ferruccio?"

Ferruccio and the rest knew not what to reply to these gentle words; and in truth it was no easy matter to make a fitting answer.

Father Zaccaria, who, though his mind was inflamed with his political sentiments, was yet, at the same time, a just man, of severe and steady goodness, had had the same thoughts rise up in his heart which Laodamia had expressed, without having attempted to utter them; turning, therefore to Father Benedict, he said,—

"That which we, the ministers of the holy Evangile, ought to have said, Laodamia has said. God often speaks by the mouth of innocence; Heaven bless thee, my child!"

Laodamia blushed, and was silent; Lisa, unobserved, took hold of her hand, and pressed it to her lips; thanking her, with mute eloquence, for having so exactly read her thoughts.

Niccolo continued absorbed in profound thought; at that moment the passions of parties, the hatred that he had nursed for so many years against the Palleschi, could scarcely hold their ground against the sublime tenderness, which was expressed in the words of his daughter: he approached her, laid his hand on her head, and added,—

"A blessing on thee, my dear, my beloved Laodamia!"

Even the stern Ferruccio, (so great and irresistible is the force of goodness!) advancing towards her, stood gazing on her for a moment in an attitude of respectful admiration, and then said,—

"You say well, Laodamia; but as the world goes at present, we should come badly off with all this forbearance; if an enemy stands before you, strike him down, if you can; and when he is down, don't trouble yourself to lift him up again; for he who cuts down a hanging man, will be hanged by him. As for other matters, I am a soldier, and no clerk; I am a patriot, and therefore the enemy of my country's enemies. If I could kill them all, I would not fail to do so; more than this, I intermeddle not with other matters."

"I deny not that we may, nay, that we ought, to kill them sometimes," replied Laodamia, timidly raising her calm blue eyes to the harsh and turbid countenance of the stern republican; "but may we not, at the same time, weep over the painful necessity that compels us to shed so much blood? May we not feel pity, instead of hating them? May we not, at least, pray for them, who, if they fall, leave, perhaps, behind them bereaved mothers and disconsolate wives?—and besides, they have each an immortal soul to be saved or lost! You, Father Zaccaria, said just now, that now is the time to obtain pardon and compassion from Heaven. Do you not think that, instead of priding ourselves on our hatred of the Palleschi, —instead of exulting in the thought of their writhing and palpitating limbs—it would be a better way towards winning this compassion, to pray for them—to ask of God the strength to repel them, indeed, and to defend ourselves from them;

but, in showing ourselves good citizens, not to forget that we are also Christians?"

To these words, constrained, as it were, by an irresistible influence, first Father Zaccaria, and then all the rest—even Ferruccio—fell on their knees. The friar raised his voice, no longer loud and imprecatory, as before, but sweet and softened.

"Gracious God!" he exclaimed, "*ex ore infantium et lactentium perfecisti laudem;*—a child has given glory to Thy name, more than we, who are Thy appointed servants! Receive now this fresh prayer:—Save Thy people from the violent hands of the wicked; but remember that those wicked men are more miserable than we, since they declare themselves Thy enemies, and deny Thy holy name; remember that they are our brethren; that we are all Thy children;—remember that we have all been the purchase of one redemption. Pour, therefore, into them the feelings of justice; into us, those of gentleness and pity; bestow on them Thy pardon, and give us the grace to grant it, and to seek it of Thee for them. We especially commend to Thee, O Lord, the Emperor Charles V., since he is our greatest enemy. We commend to Thee Pope Clement VII. We commend to Thee the whole family of the Medici—"

These words sounded so novel, so almost treasonable, that they made every one start.

"We commend to Thee all our enemies, the Palleschi."—

Poor Lisa, who was on her knees, with her face buried in her hands, felt, at the utterance of this prayer, two streams of tears trickling down her hands and arms.

"We commend to Thee, finally, all who have done, or seek to do us harm. Let this prayer, O God, come up to the foot of Thy throne, and, according to Thy promises, may it obtain for us that pity and that forgiveness, which we have not denied to our brethren."

The prayer ended, they all rose with a serene and cheerful countenance; for such is the first fruits of the victory, that charity gains over the passions of party hatred and animosity.

"Hark! that's the Trojan maid sounding,"* said Bernardo; "it's time to be off, in God's name!"

Then, turning to Laodamia, he smiled, and said,—

"I'll not tell the magistrates what kind of prayers you have made us say to-night, as I would not that our expectation of sleeping in our beds, should be changed into passing the night in prison."

After saluting Niccolo, they all went out. The friars took their way to the convent, Bernardo to his house, and Ferruccio said he must go to the palace, for some business or other that he had with the gonfalonier.

The events of the evening had poured a little balm into Lisa's heart. Accustomed to hear the

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* One of the bells in the palace of the Seigniory was so called.

Palleschi spoken of only as one would speak of wild beasts, her ears constantly assailed with words that breathed only of slaughter against them, she had felt her heart revive at the accents of that petition, as if refreshed by a dew from heaven. Without well knowing how to define the nature of the hopes she might entertain, she yet seemed to discern the first faint dawn, as it were, of a less gloomy future. She hastened up to her room with Laodamia, and shut herself in; and when she felt secure from surprise, she ran into the adjoining apartment to her child's cradle, whom she found calmly sleeping. In turning itself round, as young children do, it had disarranged its little bed; its little leg, fair and round, with its tiny foot, peeped out from beneath the clothes; its arms were thrust out, one this way, and the other that, with its pretty little hands, so small and yet so plump; and its well-rounded chest, as it rose and fell, was so white and glossy, that it looked like satin, and stole, rather than took, the kisses bestowed on it.

The poor mother bent down towards the cradle, taking care, however, not to wake him; and, giving vent to a thousand feelings, which she had been obliged to keep pent up during the evening, began to weep unrestrainedly. Calming herself by degrees, she began to talk to her child, who was now waking up, had opened his eyes, and with his little hands was at one time taking hold of his toes, at another, playing with Lisa's chin.

"Ah, my poor Arrigo! my charmer! your

mother's darling!—do you know, they have prayed even for you, at last; they have prayed even for papa!"

Then turning to Laodamia, she said,—

"Do you know, I was almost on the point of disclosing everything! When Father Zaccaria said, 'Let us pray for our enemies, the Palleschi,' I was within a hair's breadth of saying, Let us pray, then, for my husband!"

"In truth I know not well what to say," replied Laodamia; "sometimes I am almost inclined to think it would be the best thing to do. However, measure seven times before you cut once."

"The more I think of it, the more do I repent not having done it. You see what a life of fear we pass: it is not possible to endure such a life long; besides, you well know, that to me this continual concealment and dissimulation is difficult and insupportable. I was a coward not to venture to seize that moment, when their hearts were a little less hard than usual. Had I spoken at that time, the uproar must necessarily have been less serious, unless they were bent on giving the lie to their words and to their prayers."

Laodamia only partially shared her sister's hopes. Her clear understanding showed her, that it was not wise to trust to a moment of excited feeling; and that we must not think that hearts, that have become hardened by hatred and revenge, can so suddenly and so entirely change. She therefore said to her sister, "My dear Lisa, as for that matter, God only knows how it would have turned out; and for myself, as I have never attempted to offer you any advice (except on that first occasion), so neither do I now; what I can certainly tell you is, that whatever course you may resolve to take, you will find me ever ready to assist you, to support and encourage you as far as my life and strength will allow. You know my life consists in your love, and in that of my family; that I know of no other joy, and can conceive no other, beyond that of being beloved, and of attending to the welfare, the peace and happiness of those who love me."

Poor Laodamia thought perhaps in her secret heart of Lambert, when she said these words; but not venturing to dwell on the thought of him, she centered on Lisa and her family those affections, which at any rate required some object on which to rest.

Lisa, melted into tenderness, threw her arms around her sister's neck, and said, "I believe that angels have hearts like yours. Oh if I had attended to you the morning of my return from church; but since then, it has appeared to me more difficult every day. What can be the meaning of it, that this evening, on the contrary, I felt myself urged with such force to confess, to reveal all?"

"God sometimes," rejoined Laodamia, "puts into our hearts what He would have us do."

"Come then," said Lisa, quickly; "I'm determined to do what He inspires me to do. To-morrow; by that time surely the words you spoke, the prayers of Father Zaccaria, will not have quitted my father's mind; he will be satisfied with punishing me for having shown so little dutifulness to him, for having married without his knowledge; but he will not refuse me that pardon which, but a few hours ago he besought for his enemies. He will not cast me off from being his daughter, and drive me from his home, only because a Palleschan is become his son-in-law. And besides, I'll throw myself at his feet with my little Arrigo; I'll pray to him as I pray to God. God refuses not forgiveness; can he do so?"

Hope is an evil that easily clings to us, if it can be called an evil, even when fallacious. Laodomia too, at last, came to think that after the first ebullition of anger, matters would probably settle down quietly again.

Lisa, sitting down by the cradle, took her child in her arms, and giving it the breast, said, "Come, my little angel, and God grant that when you are a man, these accursed parties may be extinct."

The child sucking eagerly, Lisa said to him with a smile, "Nay, but you must leave me a little strength for to-morrow. Ah, well! but God will give it me."

By degrees the little fellow began to close his eyes, and his mother rocking him in her chair, sung in a low tone a lullaby, so as to send him soundly to sleep. Laodamia, standing behind her sister, was combing his hair, and then put him on a little knitted night-cap.

Mona Fede, dragging her heels in a pair of old shoes, was engaged in preparing the beds for her two young mistresses, and was arranging the cradle by Lisa's bed-side. She had listened attentively to the conversation of the two sisters, but the conclusion was anything but agreeable to her. Remembering the part she had acted in Lisa's marriage ceremony, she could already picture to herself Niccolo and the whole family at her back; so that when they ceased speaking, with many sighs and shakes of the head, but still going on with her necessary preparations for the night, she began to mutter,—

"Hum! God grant it may turn out well! It's soon said, tell everything! and what then? What if everything should turn topsy-turvy? If some worse devilry should come of it? As we are, we do live at all events; though with some bother. We stand on thorns, it is true, but at present matters are not desperate, and one day or another we shall find a way of getting out of this mystification. At all events, in God's name, you mustn't say I have had a hand in't, that I was—you know, I have no concern in the business!"

"No, no; I'll not tell him anything about you," replied Lisa, smiling at the alarm of the old woman.

"Well, I tell you this, you'll have pretty good courage if you can bring yourself to tell Sir

Niccolo, I am the wife of——Ugh! holy virgin! —just think—he is a worthy man, none can say he is not; he's a saint; but when you come to certain points with him, he's like a fury. I have been now in this house many a long year's agone; and I have seen him at times as you never have. Why, he would have made Signor John himself tremble. When you add to all other things the calibash of the lily and the six balls, then good-bye to ye! What they mean by it all, I don't know. All I know is, that when Signor Lorenzo was alive, and the Florentines shouted Palle, wheat was not at seven liræ the bushel, nor wine at eight and nine golden florins the barrel, as it is now. As for the rest, the rich and the great have their fancies, and I don't meddle in them; but I was going to say anent Signor Niccolo, and when he gets into a rage. On the coming of the French in '94—you were not then in existence—the corporals of the army, as is the way of that nation, used to pay their court to the pretty lasses of Florence; and there was a certain Gascon captain, the very deuce himself must have tempted him, to take it into his head to be frequently on the watch here under the balcony for my lady Flora, your mother. One day, my master, on his return home, encountered him just at the gate. I can tell you, with a single word and a single look from him, the captain thought it best to change his quarters. In a word, mind what you do."

"Fede, leave me to myself; I have taken my resolution, and you know I don't change."

"Eh! I know it; know it too well. However, God grant your resolution may prove a wise one; but ever since the day when the lions* got fighting and the lioness was killed, not a single thing has ever gone well either for the city, nor here in this house. I have even heard old men say, there is no worse omen to this city; and last night, when all was still, we could hear the roaring of that great lion that came with the giraffe, which the Sultan sent to make a present to Lorenzo, in '88. The poor animal knows full well why he howls and roars in that way."

"And I, too, know why," replied Lisa; "and I can tell you at once; he roars because he is hungry. Now that ass's flesh sells for a carlin a pound, maybe he gets but scanty fare."

"Listen! listen! and you'll hear whether he keeps on howling or no!"

The three females all on a sudden stopped their conversation. Lisa arrested the rocking of her chair. Fede restrained even her breathing; each intent on listening. The hour was late, the city quite still, the situation of the house lofty, and not very far from the palace of the Seigniory, behind which was the den for the lions. Every now and then the deep and sonorous howl of those creatures was heard; for as Lisa had guessed, in the straits of the siege they were suffering from hunger.

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* In Florence, in the time of the republic, lions were kept at the public expense, and the greatest care was taken of them, in honour of the Marzocco (a figure of a lion, in stone, at the corner of the palace), one of the emblems of the city. The populace had many superstitious notions respecting these lions.

But while the girls were standing listening attentively to the distant roaring of the lions, a sound smote on their ears terrible and near. It was Niccolo's voice, who, striking with furious blows at the door, was calling out,—

"Open the door, vile hussey!"

CHAPTER XI.

Amongst the numerous laws and customs by which the Florentine republic was governed, there was one which, notwithstanding that it was devised for the protection of their freedom, was not seldom prejudicial to it, and was constantly productive of the worst effects. It was called the *tamburagione*. In order that every citizen might have a secret and secure method, and one that was always accessible, of accusing to the magistrates any one who was plotting against the State, and at the same time to remove all fear in the case of powerful or dreaded individuals, there were fixed in various parts of the city, boxes called *tamburi*, in the lid of which there was a hole cut, by which letters or papers might be passed in, and the keys of these boxes were kept by the magistrates. Whoever, therefore, wanted an accusation against a citizen to reach their hands, thrust a letter containing it into a *tamburo* (and that was called *tamburing*), and breaking in two a silver coin, kept one half himself, and the other he enclosed in the letter; so that if, on a future occasion, it was of importance to make himself known, he had the means of doing so. This system never at any time produced more than a slight advantage, if it did any; and was often used as the instrument of malignity, of hatred and revenge, by cowards and villains.

Benedetto de Nobili, who, if the reader recollects, had concerted with Malatesta the measures that were to be set on foot, in order to force Niccolo to admit Troilus as his son-in-law, had been so far successful as to discover where Lisa's baby was. He knew that he could gain his other point very easily by means of the *tamburagione.* Having written a letter adapted to his purpose, he placed it in the box that was affixed to the wall of the palace of the Seignory, on that side where the custom-house offices were, and it duly came into the hand of the chief gonfalonier, Carduccio, the very evening that the events transpired which have been recorded in the preceding chapter. The letter ran thus:—

"Most Noble Lord,

"Whereas it has come to the knowledge of certain patriotic citizens, who are attached to our popular institutions, that there is a certain person who aims and desires to bring about a change, and maintains secret communications with the enemies of Florence and of liberty, they hold themselves bound to give notice thereof, to those who can prevent so great a misfortune.

"Your Highness must know, then, that many entertain doubts with regard to Niccolo de Lapi; and it is thought that his acerbity against the

Palleschan party is only an empty pretence, to cloak designs hostile to our present constitution. The reason of such suspicions is this:—that we know, that often before the commencement of the siege, there was admitted into his house secretly by night, and by a passage that looks on to the street De Conti, Troilus of the Ardinghelli, a traitor to whom Niccolo has married his daughter; and in order to keep the connexion secret, afraid, perhaps, that it might produce suspicions in the minds of the people, he now has a child, the fruit of this marriage, carefully guarded in some rooms at the top of the house, separated from the rest of the mansion.

"There are some who depose to their having seen Troilus enter his house by night, even lately, since the enemy have been encamped before the city; although it is known that the aforesaid Troilus is serving in the army of the Prince of Orange,"—(this was utterly false, and Benedetto knew it better than anybody else.)—"Your Highness will at once be able to ascertain the truth of these facts, and judge what inference is to be drawn from such intrigues, conducted with so much secrecy; and whether they comport with the character of a good and loyal citizen. In any case we would not fail of giving this information to your Highness, *whom God preserve!*"

Carduccio could scarce fetch his breath when reading this charge. Niccolo, his friend, the man on whom never yet a shadow of suspicion had rested, to believe him a traitor, to think him even capable of playing a double part; he could not bring himself to credit it. On the other hand, the letter specified facts so precise, that they could easily be verified!—He paused a moment in suspense; but soon the good opinion that he had of the old republican rose triumphant within him, and he determined to show him on the present occasion, how firmly he confided in his integrity.

Just at that moment, Ferruccio waited on him. Having placed the letter in an envelope, and sealed it, he begged him to convey it immediately to Niccolo, with these words:—"The Gonfalonier sends you the enclosed document, that you may see in what estimation he holds you." He thought it best to make use of Ferruccio for the purpose, and not a servant, in order that any alteration that might appear in Niccolo's face, when he read such a serious charge, might not be witnessed by any but a prudent and friendly person, and so the matter might not become the common talk.

Ferruccio arrived at Niccolo's house, and walking in, not without some surprise on the part of Niccolo at seeing him so soon again, he placed the letter in his hand, repeating the exact words of Carduccio. Niccolo opened it, read it, and for a moment said not a word nor moved a muscle. Then rising up and approaching the light, he rubbed his eyes and forehead with his hand, gazed fixedly on Ferruccio's face, as if to be sure it was he, and then began to read the paper again from the beginning. Having finished this second reading, and assured himself that it was not all a dream, his first thought was, that it was only a fabrication of his enemies to bring him under suspicion. And it was fortunate that it was so; for had he have thought it could be true, it is probable that coming on him so unexpectedly, he might have fallen down dead. Two or three times he attempted to speak, but his tongue seemed to cleave to the roof of his mouth, and he remained silent; at last, making an effort to prevent the tempest that was raging in his heart from being visible to Ferruccio, he begged him to thank Carduccio for his generous opinion, and with brief but courteous words dismissed him. Then turning to his sons, who were now left alone with him, with a glance that made them tremble, he said in a tone, to which none in the house dared reply,—“ Let no one presume to quit this room till I return; I shall soon learn whether beneath this roof there are any traitors harbouring.”

The three young men, amazed and confounded, looked at one another without uttering a word. Niccolo, taking a light in his left hand, was on the point of leaving the room, when passing Vieri, he seized the dagger that hung at his side. He then went out, and closing the door, began to mount the stairs. When he had gained the first landing, he stopped a moment to think, then hurled the weapon away, and it fell at the bottom of the stairs.

Having reached the door of the room where his daughters slept, he stopped once more to listen for a moment, and applying his eye to the key-hole, the poor wretched old man became at last aware of his disgrace. Lisa was at that moment suckling her baby.

At that sight, his eyes becoming quite dizzy, he struck the door twice with his clenched fist, so furiously, that he almost wrenched it from its fastenings, and in a voice that more resembled the roaring of a wild beast, he uttered that shout which we have a little before mentioned,—

"Open the door, vile hussey!"

Two or three seconds passed, and no one opened it. Niccolo with a strong push burst open the door, already loosened, and entering, stood still in the middle of the room. The two girls were all at once as if turned to ice, and as white as two marble statues. The old man continued silent, and seized with a convulsive trembling, fixed on Lisa two eyes of flame, which seemed to consume her, as if she had been wax.

"It's true, then!" at last he roared out, in such a tone that his sons could hear him on the ground floor; and transported by the fury of the moment, he assailed his daughter with the most horrible and opprobrious language, that was ever addressed to the vilest of her sex, to such a degree, that Laodamia, trembling all over, fell upon her knees, and weeping violently, took hold of the border of her father's coat. But he, turning round upon her, as a viper whose tail is trodden on, tore it out of her hands, and the terrified girl fell upon her hands and face to the ground.

Lisa, with her head bending down to her lap (for at the first knock at the door, she had placed her child in its cradle), had never stirred. After the first outburst of his rage, the old man was silent for a minute, as if to recover his breath, but soon began again:—" Tell me, thou fiend of a woman, my shame,—the shame of your family,—could you not first kill me, and then do what you have done? Were there no more poniards to be got in Florence? Was it such a difficult matter to extinguish the last breath of life in an old man of ninety? Could you not first have rid yourself of him, and then, if you wanted, give yourself body and soul to the enemy? In taking from me my life, what were you taking?—but my honour, maintained so many years, pure and unsullied till now!—When I have already one foot in the grave, thou, vile wretch, art heaping the earth over me!—over these hoary hairs that ought to be the glory of my children, and your pride! And if you could not wield a poniard, why did you not counsel that hectoring bully of yours to do it?—it was a deed just fit for a gentleman, a Palleschan, a rotten courtier of the Medici, to cut an old man's throat behind his back! But the traitor knew, he could do what was worse to me than that. But, by the holy rood, I'll make him aware of his error in having left old Niccolo alive; and he'll have to repent it, for having let slip his chance. Averardo!—Vieri!"

The young men, who were eagerly listening, ran at the summons of Niccolo; and he, giving them the letter to read, that was sent to him by Carduccio, exclaimed:—

"Which of us hereafter will be bold enough to look Lambert in the face, that honourable and high-minded youth, and now doubly unfortunate?"

And here checking himself for a moment, as if struck by a new thought, "Unfortunate?" he continued; "what am I saying? He may rather thank God for having saved him from linking himself to this wretched, brazen-faced vixen, who could be false to such as he, in order to give herself to a vile traitor, a thousand times a traitor! Out of this house!" he shouted, his voice becoming louder as his fury rose: "out at once, I say, you and that brat of yours! Begone, and take him to his father, and tell him to thank God that I am neither a Palleschan, nor a gallant, nor a courtier; that, had I been one!—you have been lucky indeed in escaping with your life—but it was God who prevented my coming here with that dagger—"

While Niccolo was thus giving vent to his feelings in words, Laodamia, stretched on the ground, did not cease to sob aloud; when she attempted to embrace his knees, he would not let her, but repulsed her every time. The brothers, seeing him so inflamed with rage, dared not come near him.

Lisa, without moving, without opening her lips, had heard to the end these bitter reproaches, so long as they were directed against herself alone; but when she heard her husband called a traitor, she roused herself, and the natural impetuosity of her ardent disposition returned, like a spring, in which, the greater the pressure, the greater the force when it rebounds. She raised her pale face, fixing her gaze on her father with languid but steady eye; and sinking on her knees at a little distance from him, she said, "Will you deign to listen to one word from me, before I quit this house?"

Niccolo replied, "Say on, and be quick."

"If you had killed me, I well deserved it. I cannot deny it. I am sensible that I have been guilty of a great fault, in withholding that obedience which was due to you; and I admit that I ought, at any rate, after the evil was done, to have confessed it all to you. Laodamia, who stands here, and who never knew anything of the matter till it was done, advised me to do so: it was I who would not. So that all the fault is mine; and it is just that I should bear the punishment of it. And all that you have said to me, or may say, and whatever be the punishment you design to inflict, I will submit to it all, and bless the hand that chastens me; I shall say, that I have well deserved it. But if you are the lord and master of me, you are not of the name and honour of Troilus, who was never a traitor to any man—"

"I wish to have patience, to hear you to the end," said Niccolo, with a bitter smile.

" And," continued Lisa, " on the point of honour, he is a match for all the world. If he is of the Palleschan party, he is only what his fathers before him were; and that amounts to no more than this, that he thinks one way, and the people of this city another. And it would be too much to say, that all the citizens who are outside these walls are traitors."

" And thou, infamous wench, art thou so bold as to vilify thy country in this fashion, in Niccolo's own house? and think'st thou, foolish girl, that I'll bear it from thee? When thou wert better hiding thyself beneath the earth, and dying for very shame, or thanking God and me that you still live,—art thou so bold as to talk in this guise, and all but affirm that my daughter has been a good and virtuous girl, and that her gallant is a man of honour, and that he is no traitor who fights against his country? Ah! I now see at last what a viper I have been nursing in my bosom—what a cursed hour it was when thy mother bare thee, to my misery. Up! I say. I have borne with you too long. Up! out of this house—"

To finish his words, to rush towards his daughter, to seize her by the hair, and drag her along, on her hands and feet, towards the door, heedless of the cries and tears of Laodamia, was the work of an instant. At this, her brothers, moved to pity for their wretched sister, interposed, and released her from his grasp.

" Come, come," said Vieri, the middle one of the three, who was an easy, good-natured fellow, one of those kind-hearted men who cannot bear the sight of tears and distress, "come, come; everything must have an end at last; and sure it's enough if she goes, and if you won't have her here any more."

" O my dear father!" interrupted Laodamia, "it's true we have done wrong; but still God pardons him who repents, and begs for mercy. If what most offends you, is her having married a Palleschan, have you not within the last few hours prayed for them? And if you do not pardon, how can you hope that God—forgive my boldness—how can you hope God will pardon you?"

" Don't preach to me!" shouted Niccolo; "I have not now to learn from you, silly girl, what I ought to do. Why, we must let our daughters, I suppose, be dishonoured by the Palleschi, if we attend to your fooleries. Mind your own business. And you," (turning to Lisa,) "take that baby there, and get out of my sight. Go: and God's curse be with you!"

The poor girl, who till now lay on the floor, thrust aside like a log, with her hair all dishevelled and hanging down her face and back, and every moment heaving a convulsive sigh, raised herself with some difficulty.

" God is just," she said, her voice at every word interrupted by her sobs, "oh yes! God is just. He, and not you, will have to judge me—and will see—whether I have deserved—to be treated—in this way. As for my disobedience,—in this I was to blame,—it's true—but he is my husband,—not my gallant, as you say—I have done no wrong.—As to his being one of the Palleschi,—in this the Almighty takes no part;—I trust God is neither Palleschan nor Piagnone—He curses,—yes, He curses these parties,—these hatreds and animosities—"

"He curses undutiful children," exclaimed Niccolo,—"children who disobey, and cast reproaches in the teeth of those who gave them life, and embitter their old age, and bring them down in sorrow to the grave; and thou, wretched girl, shalt have cause to know it."

At this moment, Laodamia, all terrified, her senses failing her, and her mind bewildered by the terrible scene she had witnessed, and the horrible malediction hurled by the old man on the head of her wretched sister, was no longer able to give expression to her feelings in words; but with groans, with tears, embracing his knees, and bending her head to the ground at her father's feet, distracted and maddened with despair, throwing her arms around him, or dragging by his coat, was still trying to move him to pity. But the wretched old man was (not apparently, but actually) beside himself; and having lost his senses, and his mind now wandering, he hurled Laodamia from him with such violence, that he dashed her to the ground. She felt at first great pain in her head: by little and little, she ceased to feel anything at all, and swooned away.

His sons, seeing the cruel and harsh conduct of their father, who, with distorted features, and his hair hanging all disordered on his livid forehead, showed by his paleness and the agitation of his whole frame, as well as by the wild look of his eyes, that he was nearly bereft of his senses and his reason, came round him, imploring him with submissive and humble entreaties; and at the same time with a little gentle force, they succeeded in leading him out of the room, following his wretched and unhappy daughter; who, with her child in her arms, which was crying all the while, descended the stairs, and, without once turning round, made her way into the street. The father meantime, recovering from his momentary stupor, released himself from the arms of his sons, and, having slammed the gate to, drew the bolt, and, without another word, rushed into his room, and turned the key of the door.

It was now about midnight: the north wind was drifting across the street a misty and icy rain; in the midst of which the wretched Lisa walked along in the dark, without knowing whither; now stumbling and almost falling; now stepping into pools of mud and water, almost up to her knees,—but with no other care or thought but to keep her child locked close in her arms, and well wrapped up, to shelter it from the cold and rain. She endeavoured to keep close under the wall; and, to direct her (for having her hands engaged, she could not feel her way), she raised her eyes from time to time, and followed the line of the projecting roofs, which, in the general darkness, were darker than the murky sky itself; and it was with some difficulty she could distinguish them. She went wandering on in this way for some time; and, by little and little, the thoughts of her present condition, of her own danger, and her child's sufferings, chased away or effaced every other consideration. The idea that, if she fell into a swoon, the poor Arrigo would perhaps die in the street of cold and suffering, was sufficient to call forth her strength, which, she already began to feel, was failing her. She offered up a fervent prayer; and, after considering what step to take for the best, she resolved to go to the house of a female relative, who had always treated her kindly;—but she lived all the way off by the Porte San Friano. However, she could think of no other asylum; and in that direction she bent her steps. Little acquainted with the streets, especially on such a dark night, and when in such anguish of mind, she was soon, as they say, out of her reckoning, and knew not what street she was in. She stopt a moment to recover her strength and collect her ideas; and calculating the space she had already traversed, she fancied she was close to the cathedral, from whence, by the Corso degli Adimari, she would be in a direct line for the Arno. But quitting the wall, by the side of which she had been going, and proceeding forward, as she thought, into the piazza, after a few steps, she came to a narrow street; for without being aware of it, she had turned round by the back of the archbishop's palace, and was approaching Porta Rossa by Calimala. Upon this, losing all idea of her whereabouts, she felt, together with her hope, her strength and her courage fail her, and began to weep bitterly: all the while, with feeble voice, broken by her sobs, she kept calling out for aid and pity. But not a window opened—not a light appeared.

"My God! my God!" exclaimed the poor girl, hugging her child to her bosom; "to think that he should perish in this way, in the very midst of Florence!"

She then uttered a still louder cry, which ended in a wail of despair. All was in vain. Presently she could not help thinking of the causes of her present misery; hastily reflecting upon the animosity of parties, the prayers of that evening, the blind fury of the Piagnoni—she cursed them—she cursed her country! But her anguish soon changed into delirium. She was indeed an object of the deepest pity: for now her difficulty of breathing increased; a cold perspiration oozed out from every pore; she felt her very breath freeze in her jaws; her knees failed to support her; she sunk down by the wall, cowering close up to it; a deadly torpor seized her limbs; and, by little and little, her mind was going from her: it was not sleep—it was not a swoon;—it was something between the two. She remained in this state some time, but not very long. As good fortune would have it, the night-watch, under the command of Fanfulla, lighted on her; by whom she was taken care of, in the manner we have already narrated. If he felt an interest in her on first seeing her, it was increased after he had heard the tale of her misfortunes. He proffered his services to aid her to the utmost of his power; at the same time inquiring what plan she proposed for the future. But that was more than she could tell. To go to the house of her relative, as she had resolved, when she was all alone, and abandoned by all, now she could not make up her mind to; as all the kinsmen and friends of the Lapi family were furious Piagnoni; and, over and above the horror she just now felt for their blind party rage, she was besides uncertain whether, when her marriage with one of the Palleschi were known, she would meet with kindness and welcome, or reproaches and ill-treatment. Although fallen so low, her mind revolted from the idea of taking up her abode in another person's house, in the character of a guilty supplicant. She therefore replied to Fanfulla, that, if God and he did not assist her, she knew not what would become of her.

"There is one means," she added, "and the best to relieve me from my troubles; to convey me to the camp, to find my husband!"

"Eh! my child, to the camp! exactly; no easy matter, though!—In the first place, by order of Malatesta, no one is allowed to go out of Florence unless sent, or to fight; in the next, it is no easy enterprise to convoy a young girl like you, with a baby, which, if it should take it into its head to indulge its sweet pipings, a fine night, truly!—No, no, let us leave this as a last resource."

Poor Lisa's eyes filled with tears when she saw her hopes dispelled of being taken to him who was still the lord of her heart. She sighed, and said no more. Fanfulla paused a moment, as if to think; and then shaking his head, as if he had hit upon a plan, said: "Well, for some little time—till we find an opportunity—I'll think about it,—Come with me."

Taking the child in his arms, and with one hand supporting Lisa, he sallied forth from the guard-room, as it was close upon dawn; and, after a few moments, he stopt at the door of a small house in the Via Larga. After a few raps, the door opened.

"Wait here a minute," said Fanfulla, going in. Presently he came back, and brought Lisa in; where, in a poor and rather mean room, she found an old woman, wasted by want and misery, but of a benevolent countenance, who received her with every sign of good will and sympathy. It may easily be conjectured whether the poor girl required all sorts of restoratives and refreshments, but some few only could she get here; but these, offered as they were with kindness, in her sad plight were very acceptable; and soon, with her baby, placed in a little bed, she blessed God that she had still nourishment enough for him to put him to sleep. When she saw him go off, her weariness at last getting the better of the sense of her misfortunes, she, too, sunk into a deep and placid slumber.

Fanfulla, having first seen that all was right, had left, promising her that she should see him again. When he found himself in the street, he walked along with his eyes on the ground, his hands behind his back, shaking his head and breathing hard; then all at once he burst out into a loud laugh, and said,—"Well, now that Captain Fanfulla has thought fit to be this lady's knight, and has told her that he'll think what's to be done for her—as regards the baker, you know, let us see whether he's not likely to make a mess of it; with what means will he furnish her charges! and don't forget that the city is besieged; and if the famine does not wax worse, which is perhaps, as things now are, impossible—yet every day the price of flour rises! Just answer this to yourself, Master Fanfulla."

Fanfulla's answer was another burst of laughter, whilst he said,—"Everything falls on my shoulders! Ugh! if it were only the days of the sack of Rome!" But quickly putting his hand on his mouth, he recollected that ever since that event, he had practised the greatest austerities, to atone for his sacrilegious gains on that occasion. He counted the little money he had about him, the remains of the pay he had received in advance from Malatesta. He had given the greater part to

Lisa's landlady for her support, retaining scarcely a third of it for himself; but, altogether, there might be enough for both of them for a week, with great economy. Thinking again and again, at last an idea came into his mind; but one that could not be otherwise than terrible for him, since it drew a groan from his bosom, as if he had actually received a wound from a poniard. He shrugged his shoulders, wrestled with and repelled the idea, in fine, he chased it away, and quickening his pace hoped to leave it behind him. But that cursed idea still pursued him, buzzing about him and worrying him; driven away from one place, it settled in another, and though it did not cease to vex and distress him, yet it had in itself an attractive quality, of a kind almost irresistible; so that at last it got the upper hand, and poor Fanfulla was fairly obliged to give in to it.

Can you guess, my reader, what this idea was? Nothing less than giving up the exercise of arms as a horse-soldier, joining the infantry, and selling his poor old "Griffin."

Such men as Fanfulla exist not in this age of selfishness!

So great was the pity he felt for Lisa's misfortunes, and such his nice sense of honour with respect to his promise, that finding no other means, he was under the necessity of having recourse to this one, although the most distressing and terrible in the world. He continued to walk on, with his head bent towards the ground, in a desponding mood, as one who already felt himself degraded from his rank; and in the furrow of the scar that seamed his cheek, there trickled slowly down a little drop that, in anybody else, would be called a tear. But Fanfulla!—who would presume to say, that he was ever guilty of shedding a tear?

He went to the stable where his horse stood, and, on looking at him, could not help exclaiming,—"Who in the world would ever think of buying this poor beast?" He turned away his eyes from his old and faithful companion, towards whom he felt as if he were acting like a traitor, and strode away to the quarters of Amico d' Arsoli's Company. In the skirmishes that daily took place, some one or other always found himself requiring to be remounted. Fanfulla offered his horse to one of these; and though he had fully made up his mind to the sad sacrifice, there still remained in his heart a last hope,—that he should not find anybody to purchase him, as he was now quite done up. But at that time buyers couldn't be over nice, and an officer bid him thirty ducats for him. Our poor friend took the money, and soon put it in his pocket. Drawing forth the key of the stable, he gave it to the purchaser, with instructions where to find him. He did all this without once looking him in the face, and turned away with a sigh, and said: "Well, it's done now!"

The sum he had received would, in ordinary times, have supplied Lisa's wants for several months, but owing to the scarcity occasioned by the siege, it could not last a fourth of the time. An event happened that diminished it still more rapidly—Lisa fell ill. The agitations and sufferings she had endured produced a raging fever, that never abated for a fortnight; and when by the constant attention of the old woman, and of an excellent physician, and—more than all—by that of the worthy Fanfulla, she got about again, she found herself with little strength, and less money. The old woman had not enough to live upon herself, and so could not help others. Fanfulla, with no other resources than his infantry pay, did what little he could; which, if it sufficed just to keep death at a distance, was not enough to enable them to live. And poor Lisa, knowing that he lived such a life of hardship on her account, concealed the sufferings she endured, and her need of better and more plentiful food; which became the more necessary to her from her having been used to it, and from her youth and returning strength. And thus the daughter of Niccolo, born and bred up in ease and plenty, now, for the first time, experienced the terrible pangs of hunger.

The old woman, who had taken her into her house, whose name was Niccolosa, and whose occupation was washing and needlework, was known to Fanfulla, when he lived at St. Mark's; as from her living close to the convent, he often carried altar-cloths and other linen things to her. Considering her to be a worthy woman, of a kindly nature, he had placed Lisa in her house; where she was willingly received, and entertained to the best of her ability, so long as her means lasted. But when these were exhausted, the poor woman was reduced to such straits, that her own sufferings deprived her of the ability to show pity to others. Going up, therefore, one day into the small room occupied by Lisa, with an expression of deep concern in her face, but in a manner truly kind and gentle, she came to tell her, that, as to the house, she was welcome to remain there, and that she had no idea of turning her out into the streets; but with regard to her food, she must find the means of providing for herself.

And how provide for myself? thought Lisa, with a sigh; as, for several days past, she had lived off a scanty supply of bread, in which there had been more bran than flour; and even that miserable sustenance she saw must soon fail her. Clothes of any value, or jewels to dispose of, she had none; since she had quitted her home, literally in the things she stood in. And amid all her miseries, had there been only herself to suffer;—but she had a child, whose sustenance must be drawn from her own bosom!

The poor little Arrigo, whom we pourtrayed so pretty, so plump and ruddy, had become sadly altered in the course of a few weeks. His round and well-knitted limbs had become, so to speak, collapsed and flabby. His skin, once so transparent and elastic, now hung loose and languid;

hollowed and indented by every movement. Every day the poor mother, in dressing or undressing her child, closely scanned and scrutinised him from head to foot, with eyes wet with tears; and every day, she thought he was wasted away to half the size he was on the preceding one. Every day, she thought she discovered some little bone more protruding and less covered with flesh, than the day before. And though this decline was not so rapid as her maternal solicitude imagined, yet it was perceptible and constant. In fact, the poor child was nothing but skin and bone; he was pining away and wasting to a shadow.

CHAPTER XII.

The unhappy mother watched with trembling anxiety the progress of her child's declining health, ever dissolving into tears, and lavishing kisses on its poor weakly body, as if they possessed the virtue of restoring its former grace and beauty. But that virtue which was once in her own bosom, pain and privation, distress and hunger had almost entirely exhausted. The horrors of the scene when she was driven from her home, the terror and alarm that she felt that first night, together with her exposure to the cold, had suddenly checked the flow of milk to her breast; nor was her mode of living calculated to restore it. The child, never satisfied, was continually crying; and the hapless mother, deprived of all resources to quiet it, kept it all day close to her breast; but even that was of no avail; for the child finding it yield nothing to satisfy its cravings, gave up vainly sucking, and turning away from her bosom, would break out into feeble and disconsolate moans.

The very day on which Niccolosa came to make her doleful announcement, the poor girl towards evening, being alone in the house, felt more weak and more enfeebled than usual. The continual holding of the child to the breast had quite exhausted her. A violent pain at the chest prevented her from drawing her breath freely; and by degrees, she felt a sort of suffocating sensation.

Seated by the window, with her child in her lap, which was sleeping languid and exhausted, or rather, was in that dreamy state, which follows on exhaustion, she was watching the declining light at the close of the evening; thinking, with a shudder, on the advancing darkness of a long and dreary winter's night. Having no light, she was compelled, when night drew on, to go to bed; and those long and dreary hours, passed in darkness, without the power to close her eyes, and in hopeless attempts to quiet the moans of her child, made her shudder at the very thought of it; and was, perhaps, one of the greatest miseries of her present condition.

One moment, she raised her eyes to the leaden-coloured sky, which was every instant becoming darker; at another, she let them fall sad and lustreless on the thin, attenuated face of her child, watching its breathing, which she fancied was becoming, gradually, more frequent and more difficult. She thought she observed that the pallid whiteness of its skin was contracting a livid hue, particularly round the lips; she rose up alarmed, and hoping these appearances might be the effect of the diminished light, she took him, and looked attentively at his face, close to the window; where she discovered, that the livid hue was no illusion, that the lips were becoming of a dark, purple colour, that the half-closed eyes just opened for a moment, the pupils rolled round, and then disappeared beneath the lids. The distracted mother uttered a loud shriek; for she thought her child's last hour was come, and hastily laying it down on the bed, in a moment stripped it of its clothing, and trembling with anxiety, with the greatest trepidation and alarm, began to foment it; and so, with her hands, with her breath, and, without being conscious of it, with the tears which streamed from her eyes, she trusted she should succeed in rekindling in it the vital heat.

By-and-by, trying other means, she stretched herself over her child, applying her mouth to its mouth, covering it and trying to cherish it with the warmth of her body; and then she would press into its lips a drop of milk, which her breast had reluctantly yielded; but the delight of seeing it swallow, which she would have purchased with her life, was not hers. Then starting up again, wild with distraction, and giving unrestrained vent to her tears, clasping her hands convulsively, or grasping her hair: "O my child," she would exclaim, "O the love, the light of thy poor mother—do not abandon her!—No, no, no!—Oh, if he would but look at me! O God! for I have nothing else in the world but this my little angel,—and he too is going to leave me! Oh, Arrigo, my darling, do but look at thy poor mother!—do but smile!—oh, to see those dear little lips smile yet once more,—and then die! O God! O God! Take me—take me, take all—yes all;—but my child, my love, my darling, my heart,—oh! no, no—it cannot be,—oh, you cannot mean it!—"

But the child stirred not; and scarcely breathing, gave no sign that could afford a shadow of a hope. The miserable Lisa, her tears now dried up, with glassy eyes, stood motionless and mute, eagerly watching him for a while; and in the meantime, what all the efforts, the cares and the tears of the mother could not do, nature effected; and the convulsions that had attacked the child, by degrees passed off.

The mother perceived this favourable change on the very first indications of it. She saw its natural colour return, and its eyes resume their calm expression, and all its features wear their wonted composure. Silent and trembling, she marked the change with a palpitating heart; but when she saw her child's lips relax into a smile, she uttered a scream of delight, weeping and laughing all at once; and such was her frantic joy, and the agitation of her mind, that, scarce able to support herself, she sunk on her knees at the bed-side, and overwhelming her little son with kisses, she exclaimed:

"O God, I knew so! Oh! it was not possible! it would have been too much for a poor mother—for a poor, unhappy——Unhappy? Who says I'm unhappy?—that I am poor? My darling is restored to me! He looks at me and laughs. I have seen him smile! I am happy, I am rich; I am too happy; I ask for nothing else—I have no heart for any other joy, for any other love! Oh, Arrigo! thou hast killed thy mother! O little villain!—no, no, not villain!—angel, angel of Paradise! for now thou hast restored me back to life again!"

And these effusions not sufficing to give vent to her affections, so uncontrollable and so fervent, she ended with a flood of tears, and lavished on him a thousand caresses and embraces.

Meantime it had become quite night. When the tempest of so many opposing feelings had begun to subside in her heart, Lisa turned her thoughts to her present position, and to the dangers she ran, if her circumstances continued as they were—that the calamity, which had just now only threatened, might really befal her. Maternal love overcame the fear she experienced at the bare thought of her father, and she resolved to go to him without delay, to implore succour for the sake of her child, and to obtain it, or perish at his feet.

Arrigo was sleeping. She made over him the sign of the cross—disposed him in such a manner that, if he moved, he might not be in danger of falling—and then kissing him, she went down stairs, groping her way to Niccolosa's little room on the ground-floor.

"For the love of God," she said to her, "be so kind as to listen if my little Arrigo cries. I shall be back presently."

The old woman began to chide her for attempting to go out alone, now it was night; but to no purpose, for Lisa was already out of hearing.

The night was dark and the streets deserted; here and there a shop half-open, and the feeble glimmer of the lights within, just served to prevent her losing her way. Lisa kept close to the wall, and walked on with hurried steps. In a few minutes she stood before the great gate of her father's house, which she now revisited for the first time. At the sight of it, she could not refrain from tears; but drying them soon, and stopping on the first of the two steps, by which the threshhold was reached, her resolution failed her, nor could she summon up courage to ring for admittance. She saw a light at the windows of Niccolo's apartments on the ground-floor; thereupon, mounting on the stone seat which extended the whole length of the building, she succeeded, by laying hold of the iron bar, in raising herself up so as to see into the room. She caught sight of Niccolo and Laodamia, who were the only persons there—he in his chair by the chimney-corner, and she at her work-table. Both sat quite still, without saying a word, and both displayed such traces in their countenances as might, by those who were unacquainted with the circumstances, be attributed either to some calamity that had befallen them, or to a recent illness. Lisa, who knew the first to be a fact, had her fears for the second; and she was not wrong.

We have already related how, at the conclusion of the terrible scene when Lisa was thrust out of her home, Laodamia lay in a swoon on the ground. Assisted by the servant, she revived so far as to be able with difficulty, and not without help, to get to her bed; but, attacked by a fever, and her mind becoming delirious, her life for some days was despaired of; for many more, she was confined to her bed; and that very evening she had come down to Niccolo's room for the first time.

Her father, too, had suffered little less. But being of a sterner spirit, and a stronger constitution, he would neither keep his bed nor see a physician, nor, indeed, anybody. His sons, who had let fall some expressions in favour of Lisa, he had dismissed from his presence, and he only admitted the company of Laodamia upon the express understanding, that she never entered on that topic. In fine, it was forbidden to everybody, under pain of his displeasure, to hold any kind of communication with the wife, as he called her, of that Palleschan traitor.

Laodamia, however, when just sufficiently recovered to be able to collect her ideas, knowing that whatever she did must be without the cognizance of her father, had joined with her brothers to find out poor Lisa, should it cost a world. And in fact they had sought everywhere in Florence, but without any success; and Laodamia, especially, was reduced to utter despair.

Lisa surveyed attentively first her father, then her sister; the paleness, the sorrow depicted on the countenances of both—the motionless posture, and the silence maintained by them—were so many shafts that pierced her heart.

"See," she said to herself, "what you have been the cause of!—See to what you have brought your poor old father and your sister—that spotless angel! And do you expect that God will not requite you?—Can you hope that He will permit you to have the comfort of your child?" And here, overcome by the thought that the Divine vengeance might perhaps punish her by the death of her child, she could refrain no longer, but burst into such a loud weeping, that Niccolo and Laodamia heard it.

"Who's crying there?" said the old man, rising up; and going toward the window, he opened it. Lisa, seeing her father move, overwhelmed with terror, had got down from the bench, and sinking on her knees on the pavement, she said:

"Ah, father dear! for myself I ask nothing—I don't deserve it—but my poor child—what has he done?—if his mother is a wretch—if his——"(the hapless girl had still self-possession enough not to name Troilus at that moment.) "Oh, father! my poor wretched baby lives off the milk of my breast, and I have no more! I have no strength, no breath, no life! Hunger, father dear, hunger!—Oh God! if you have ever felt hunger!—and to see a poor little child die with hunger!——"

Lisa, when she had finished these last words, raised her trembling head, thinking it impossible that Niccolo could be so hard-hearted as not to show some signs of pity. She already in imagination saw her father at the window, in an attitude of kindness and welcome. But instead of this, the window was closed and the light disappeared. The poor girl, maddened with despair, for a moment hesitated, whether or not to dash her head on the stones beneath her feet.

Niccolo was no sooner aware that it was his daughter, than he drew back, without, however, losing a single word of what she said. Laodamia, without uttering a syllable, had approached him, and with silent tears embraced his knees. But the old man, having forcibly raised her up, pointed to the door, and said, in a tone, which he intended to be menacing and severe, but without being able to render it so: "Laodamia, I do not change; leave the room, and go up stairs—I desire—I command you to do so."

When he saw he was not immediately obeyed, he repeated the command; and this time, in a manner that no one in the house ever attempted to oppose. Laodamia left the room, her face buried in her hands. The old man stopping for a moment and listening, till he heard the sound of Laodamia's footsteps die away, as she slowly ascended the stairs, went quickly to the buttery, placed in a cloth as much bread as it would contain, and then came and opened the great gate, and leaving the provisions on the threshold, closed it again with bolt and bar. Poor Lisa, on hearing the gate open, had hastily risen from the place where she was lying, with all the speed her feeble strength would permit, and with a trembling anxiety, that may well be imagined, she advanced toward it, in hopes she was going to be admitted into the house. But she reached it just at the moment, when the bolts were shot back into their staples, and saw the cloth on the ground with the bread. Her humiliations and sufferings had quite prostrated her; she had not sufficient strength left either to weep or to complain. She sat upon the step, took out a loaf, and began to eat it with avidity: for she felt faint from hunger; and the sense of her mental sufferings being extinguished, or, at all events, suspended, she thought to herself, with a sigh—Ah, what comfort would it be—how nice, if I had a good fire, and a little wine, all cold and weak as I am!

Laodamia had hardly got up stairs, when she came down again, without a light, and with her shoes off, for fear of making a noise; hoping to baffle the vigilance of her father, and to get to see Lisa. Looking down from the top of the stairs, without being seen, she witnessed the action of Niccolo, saw him pause, after he had shut the gate, and, with his eyes bent towards the ground, stand still, for some minutes, which seemed so many ages to her, then wipe away his tears with the back of his hand, and at last retire into his room. Laodamia hastened to the gate, which she opened very gently, and went out into the street. It was all dark and still; she advanced a few steps, calling out in a low suppressed voice, but as distinct as she could: "Lisa, my dear, my dear Lisa!" There was no answer—and yet, she thought, she cannot already have got so far away as not to hear me; oh! if I did but know which way she has gone! To think of her being so near, and yet not to be able to find her! And if I lose this opportunity, perhaps I shall never have another!—I'll call out louder still, happen what may. And the gentle Laodamia called out her sister's name in a clear shrill voice, two or three times.

A voice, not that of a female, but hoarse and masculine, close to her, replied: "Who can be calling for Lisa in the street at this time of night?"

And immediately a mounted soldier presented himself before her, who reined back his horse, while the terrified girl fled back to the gate. She went inside, but did not shut it quite to; and turned again to look out, from some strange impulse; for when her first alarm was passed, she fancied the voice sounded not quite strange to her.

The cavalier approaching, dismounted and said to her: "Laodamia, are you looking for Lisa in the street at this hour?"

"Oh, Lambert!"—But she could say no more, for his unexpected arrival came on her like a clap of thunder. She had indeed many a time longed for his presence, even since Lisa's marriage; for though she felt how painful it would be to disclose it to him, yet the idea of Lambert being near her, would have reassured her; she thought, in him she should find a guide and support; that he would devise remedies, where no one else could, and concert measures, where every one else was at a loss. But when she pictured his return to herself, she had imagined it would be in such a way, that she would have plenty of time to arrange the mode of breaking the matter to him; but taken thus by surprise, she could not, for some time, either speak or reply. But her thoughts presently returning to Lisa, who was every moment getting further and further away, and taking a sudden resolution, she said with rapid utterance, but full of urgent entreaty: "Lambert, Providence has sent you hither—Lisa was here a minute ago—she cannot be got far—let us look for her; I cannot explain any further now—as, if a moment is lost—Oh, Lambert! let us go—you shall know the reasons—but let us make haste."

Lambert, who was as far as possible from comprehending the true state of the case, felt, however, as if a knife had pierced his heart at these strange words; he was pretty sure that some important matter was connected with them; but like a sensible man, dismissing for the present every other thought, and asking no questions, he followed her; so that, emboldened by such a companion, she was determined to search, till she found her sister. They took the direction leading to the Cathedral, and at every step they kept calling her by name.

But before we narrate the result of this search, it may be as well to say a word or two of the adventures of Lambert, from the day on which he quitted Niccolo's house.

War at that time was raging between Charles V. and Francis I. The people of Florence, who by hereditary usage, followed the fortunes of France, had, in the French camp, a countryman of theirs, the most renowned and valiant soldier of Italy at that day, John de Medici, captain of those famous bands which, after his death were called the *black bands.* Lambert proposed to himself, to learn the art of war in his school; and a Florentine citizen, a friend of the Lapi family, had given him a letter, strongly recommending him to that illustrious captain. As soon as he knew that he was in Lombardy, where the Germans, who under the command of George Frundsberg, had made a descent into Italy, through the Valley of the Adige, were already sounding the note of war, he took his route through Bologna, Parma, and Piacenza, and by easy journies, that he might not, on his arrival, find his horse done up, arrived in a few days at Milan.

The dukedom and the surrounding country sided with the emperor, and was everywhere crowded with Spanish and German soldiery, as far as the banks of the Adda. On the opposite side of the river, the French army was quartered in the different towns and villages of the Ghiara d'Adda; and John, with his bands, was at that time at Rivolta, with a part of his troops; the rest he had disposed in different places, from Vailà as far as to Casirate. Rivolta stands not far from the left bank of the Adda, three miles below Cassano. It was over the bridge at this place that Lambert's road lay; but a troop of Imperialists was stationed there; who, if they saw a soldier making for the enemy's camp, would doubtless have detained him. It was, therefore, necessary to determine upon a different route.

The shortest, but at the same time the most dangerous one, was to ford the Adda opposite Rivolta; and this Lambert decided upon, for, he thought, much better than any letter of recommendation, would it advance me in the good opinion of Signor John, if I could make my way to his camp, by giving some proof of my prowess before his eyes.

Thus resolved, he set out one morning towards the end of June, joyful and light-hearted, from Milan, upon his good steed, which he had well rested after his journey; and being in every respect well equipped. Passing without interruption through several bodies of soldiery, who thought he belonged to the Imperial army, a little after mid-day he found himself in that part of the country where the champaign lands, being no longer cultivated, are covered with woods, and the soil, becoming gravelly, indicates that, at no great distance, is the bed of the river.

He followed the winding path, as it led him through ravines, now stony, now sandy; and arriving at a spot where there was a slight rise in the ground, he perceived, in the midst of a vast bed of sandy and arid gravel, the waters of the Adda, rolling on clear and rapid. On the further side, surmounting the belfry-tower of Rivolta, he saw Lord John's banner waving, with the Medicean emblem of the six balls. The sight of this could not but rouse one, who was sprung from the commonalty of Florence; and Lambert, compressing his teeth, and digging his spurs into his horse, thought to himself:—A curse upon it, to think I must fight under that device! but he quickly called to mind, that the branch from which the valiant captain was descended, was the sworn enemy of that which had weighed so heavily on Florence. Dismissing these thoughts, therefore, he rode on.

Here, however, knowing that he was at the most dangerous point (for in time of war, as everybody knows, to pass the line which divides friends from foes is thought a suspicious action), and fearing to meet a body of Imperialists who might be out, watching the river, he seated himself more firmly in his saddle, grasped his buckler more tightly, and, with his lance on his thigh, was all eye, as he rode on, that he might not be attacked unawares. He had taken his precautions in good time; for, scarcely emerging from the wood, he had not gone ten paces on the open gravel, when he heard a rustling of the boughs in his rear, and turning in the direction of the sound, he saw rush out from behind the bushes three crossbow-men on horseback, and two heavy-armed soldiers, who all at once advanced rapidly towards him. He had observed on the opposite side of the river a considerable number of the soldiers belonging to the bands he was desirous to join; and amongst them, two persons of commanding presence, on horseback, who, it appeared, were attentively watching, to see the result of this encounter. The thought struck him:—" What, now, if that were Signor John there!" and this hope redoubled his courage, and even his strength; and he muttered to himself, " One against five: it's a rare chance. Now, may God help me!" One of the two heavy-armed soldiers, advancing, shouted out to him:—

" Who art thou, and on whose side?"

" On neither," replied Lambert, without either advancing or retreating.

" Whose war-cry?" rejoined the other, couching his lance.

" Long live Signor John! long live Florence! and death to all traitors!" shouted Lambert, so loudly, that, being heard on the other side of the river, a hundred voices repeated the same cry. At the very moment of uttering it, our young hero, plunging his spurs into his horse's flanks, made a dash at his adversary, and piercing his saddle-bow, he wounded him in the thigh, and leaving him, (for he staggered in such a way that he seemed about to fall,) he directed his attention to the others. Luckily for him, on that gravelly soil, full of flints and large stones, the horses could not be easily handled, so that they never beset him all at once ; for, had they have done so, they would certainly have overwhelmed him. As it was, however personally brave, however desperately he might fight, it was no easy task to defend himself against four. They were, indeed, soon reduced to three; as Lambert, in the midst of the storm of blows, had seen one of them fall, without its being observed, in the heat of the combat, what was the cause of it.

In this way, continually advancing and retreating, going round and round as they fought, they had approached the shore ; and Lambert, in whose ears shouts of encouragement were resounding from the further bank, resolved to be cut in pieces, sooner than surrender. He was aware that, to contend single-handed against such odds, was, after all, to presume too much on his personal strength, or his good fortune. Watching his opportunity, therefore, he dashed into the river, leaving on the bank two of his enemies; but the third, more nimble, followed him so closely, that the horses were soon in the water breast-high, and the head of the enemy's horse pressed on the haunches of Lambert's. The brave youth, turning round, aimed his lance at the horseman. He could not, indeed, pierce his corslet; but the thrust was so forcible, that the iron plate flew in pieces. The man, on receiving the blow, communicated the shock to his horse by the pressure of his legs against his flanks; and as he had before some difficulty in keeping his footing on the shifting bottom of the river, the consequence was, that they fell down both together in the water; and a general burst of applause from the shore greeted Lambert's skilful thrust. Some of Signor John's arquebussiers had, in the meantime, by firing across the river, made the others keep at a distance; and now Lambert had nothing to contend with but the stream. At that moment, he saw, emerging from the water, at some distance, the horse's head, swimming towards the bank, and within a few yards was his rider, but almost bewildered, like one who had lost his senses.

Lambert, who, but a few minutes before, would have thought nothing of killing him in fair fight, was now distressed at seeing him on the point of drowning. He turned his horse's head towards him, and urged him forward, whilst the soldiers, perceiving his design, kept shouting, "Let him drink!" As good fortune would have it, the man was not in the current of the stream, but in a spot where the water, striking against a projection in the bank, was driven backward; so that Lambert could easily seize hold of him by the straps of his corslet; and dragging him behind him, urged his horse across the stream. The river was deep and rapid in the middle; the poor animal had to carry almost double weight; and Lambert's benevolence was well-nigh proving fatal to him. But, without losing his presence of mind, seizing his horse's mane with his left hand, which had scarcely his head above water, and encouraging him with his voice and spur, he succeeded at last in gaining the opposite bank, though somewhat lower down.

He was welcomed with the utmost enthusiasm by the soldiers, who had witnessed his brave exploit, and many waded into the water to help him to land, and relieve him of the burden of the half-drowned man, whom they stretched on the bank face downwards, jesting about the fine sturgeon, as they called him, which they had caught.

At this instant, a youthful soldier rode up, of proud bearing and very robust in form, with a leathern jerkin on, and carrying a shield which displayed the six balls on a gold ground. All made way respectfully; and he, approaching Lambert, who had now alighted all drenched with water (while from his shoulders there were dripping gouts of blood) and addressing him in curt phraseology, but graciously and good-humouredly, said: "Who art thou, my master, that fightest with such odds of one to five, to the cry of my name?"

"My name is too lowly and mean for it to be otherwise than unknown to your excellency," replied Lambert, happy beyond conception to have been seen on this occasion by the captain himself; "I have, however, a letter here of Signor ——," (he mentioned the person who had written it) "if only the water has not defaced it, which will satisfy your excellency respecting me, and will certify you how great is my desire to be trained in this, the first and most admirable school of Italian soldiers." Saying these words, and undoing his breast-plate at one side, he felt in his bosom, and drew out a letter, which the water had but little damaged. Lord John took it, with the observation: "As to your being trained, you seem to want little of that; however, let us see."

Whilst John de Medici was reading, Lambert satisfying the vehement desire he had long felt to see so valiant and renowned a warrior, was filled with admiration at his noble bearing, at his graceful horsemanship, which was bold and daring, and displaying a careless ease; he looked on him with that enthusiastic veneration, which fills every generous soul that is panting for glory, at the sight of one who is already famous for his great and glorious achievements. He never could have ventured to hope for such a piece of good fortune, as he had experienced in that day's events; and finding himself all at once raised to an honourable position amongst his new comrades, welcomed and applauded in their presence by such a man, it kindled in him a feeling of joy, too great for him to believe it anything but a dream. With beating heart, and eyes sparkling with joy, and his face beaming with a modest diffidence, which showed the more admirable in one, who had so lately given proofs of such daring courage, he waited, without stirring, till he had finished the reading of the letter.

"You lived with Sir Niccolo?" at last Lord John said, directing his eyes towards him; and then, knitting his brows, he added, as he struck his shield with his right hand: "With the greatest enemy of this escutcheon!"

Lambert was so fascinated by the presence of the great captain, that he was on the point of denying his party, Niccolo and all. But his was one of those souls, that are incapable of ever stooping to an act, that has even the shadow of meanness; so, after a moment's hesitation, he at last modestly, but at the same time unflinchingly, replied: "Niccolo, your excellency, is a favourer of the popular cause, he loves the liberty of Florence, and is only an enemy of its enemies."

"And therefore he cannot be a Palleschan. Well and good, Lambert, so speaks a brave man like yourself." And then bursting into a loud laugh, he added: "And I too, I am no longer a Palleschan. Clement would cheat me if he could, and so would I him. Well, well, it's all right; you have given such proof of your prowess, that this letter too might have floated down the Adda also. Captain Puccino, enrol this worthy lad in the company, and this evening bring him with you to the castle to supper."

Upon this, he turned his horse, and rode away in a canter towards Rivolta.

CHAPTER XIII.

Captain Puccino, to whose care Lambert had been confided, came forward to conduct him to his quarters.

"Let us go, my fine fellow," he said to him; "the water that is dripping off you, from what I can see, is not water pure."

"Oh! it's nothing at all," replied Lambert, "it's a mere scratch here on my shoulder. Let me first have a look at that archer whom I have made prisoner, and see whether he's dead or alive. Thus saying, he went to the place where they had at first laid him on the ground, and found him in the midst of a knot of soldiers; he was already sitting up, and appeared to have recovered as nearly as possible.

When Lambert was in the river, and was striving to bring him to shore, the soldiers seeing his danger and his struggles, had said among themselves: "That fellow will share the fate of Francesco Sforza!" (who had lost his life in endeavouring to save a page of his from drowning in the river Pescara). When they afterwards saw the young man acquit himself so successfully, one of them began to shout out, "Long live Sforza!"

and another: "Well done, Sforza!" and "Welcome, Sforzino!" and so, from the necessity for surnames, which prevailed at that time in Italy, particularly among the soldiery, and also from their not knowing Lambert's real name, the name of Sforzino so stuck to him, that he never lost it during the remainder of his life; and from the recollection of his glorious feat, he heard himself so called, not unwillingly.

"Come hither, Sforzino," said one of them, laughing: "for this bout, I reckon, thou hast gained a prince's ransom."

Lambert approaching, saw how much like a prince the poor fellow appeared. He was a short, lusty man, with a round heavy visage, his hair and whiskers of a flaxen colour; in respect of arms and clothes, he was miserably equipped.

"Come," said Lambert, also laughing, "let us hear who thou art, man, and thy name."

"I, signor, am a poor soltier of Schweitz, come into Italy with Captain Altsax, pecause I tought here to trink much gut wine, but I ha' trinkt much va'ter."

And continuing in this strain, he gave them to understand that he was of the canton of Zurich, his name Maurice Schuber, and that he could not pay any ransom, because he was a *poor soltier;* but he professed himself ready to follow for ever, as a servant, him who, besides having conquered him, had afterwards rescued him from that accursed water, which he so much detested.

Lambert represented to him, that he himself not being other than a poor soldier, he could not with him obtain any pay; but the Swiss, protesting that he could never requite the great obligation he was under to him, having, by his means, escaped from a watery grave, which he deemed the worst of all deaths, he hoped he might be allowed, on all accounts, to follow the fortunes of his deliverer. Lambert, discerning even in his unpolished language a certain genuine and trustful simplicity, and knowing him besides, from experience, to be a brave man, and one who could reason with arms in his hand, resolved to accept his services.

"Captain Puccino," he said, turning to his guide, "I am at your service;" and they all three bent their steps to their quarters; whilst the soldiers kept saying jestingly to Lambert: "Long live Sforzino! Thou hast gained a goodly prize; instead of a ransom, thou'lt have to pay the charges of this Swiss knave!"

The castle, to which Signor John had invited Lambert and Captain Puccino, was distant about three miles. It rose on the brow of a hill covered with woods, and looking down on stagnant pools, which were left behind from the overflowing of the Adda; for the tillers of the soil, exposed to the constant inroads of war, had had neither time nor means to drain them off. Round about the castle, several mean cottages, belonging to the peasants, and mostly thatched with straw, formed the hamlet of Casirate. Captain Puccino, and Lambert, with his new squire, arrived about five, and they all dismounted in the court-yard of the castle (for the soldiers had kindly fished out the Sweitzer's horse, too, from the river). It was an irregular enclosure, composed of buildings in various styles, surrounded by a ditch, and surmounted by a tower, square and massive, which rose on the edge of the hill. Here was John de Medici's head-quarters.

After Lambert had dried himself, and had dressed the slight wound on his shoulder, he was introduced into a spacious hall on the ground-floor, where covers were laid for about thirty; as Signor John, who was free and generous, kept open table for his officers. He received the young man as an old acquaintance; first shaking hands with him, and then turning to the Castellan, Galeazzo Menclozzo, the lord of the manor, and to several officers who were already assembled for supper, he related to them the glorious feat of Lambert at the ford of Rivolta.

The remainder of the guests arrived in due time; and, according to the custom of that day, salads were served up in dishes, as the first course, and every one sat down to table.

Whoever wishes to form an exact idea of John de Medici, may do so by adding dark brown whiskers to the head of Napoleon, and placing it on a tall and robust body.

As for Lambert, it seemed as if he could never be tired of looking at him; and as he surveyed, first one and then another of the guests, who were seated at the table, marking the bold and haughty countenances, the well-compacted limbs, and the martial bearing of his new companions, he felt so delighted, and the pleasure he felt was so plainly depicted in his face, that Puccino readily divined his thoughts.

"What think you of all this, eh, Sforzino? I can tell you, that you may boast of having supped to-night with the greatest soldiers in Italy. See you, that man there, on the right of Signor John, is Horatio Baglione, son of Paolo, and brother of Malatesta; who was for a time in the Venetian service. That other on the left, that little man with his two small peering eyes, is Ivo Biliotti. The next is Sampiero da Bastelica. That man there, you will know; he is a countryman of yours; Cecchino del Piffero, we call him; but he is of the Cellini family. His brother is the famous artificer: but for him, the sword fits his hand better than the chisel.

Lambert had observed that, in the midst of these chiefs, at the further end of the table, there sat a female. But being dressed like a man, and in other respects similar to the rest, she did not at first catch his eye; but afterwards, observing her more minutely, some jet black tresses, which peeped from beneath a scarlet cap, adorned with a tassel, which hung on one side with a smart and stylish air, and the heaving bosom, which was only partially concealed by her doublet of black and scarlet plaid, clearly denoted her sex. Her face would probably not have indicated this of itself, as it might very well have passed for that of a young lad of eighteen. The rapid and wanton glance of her eyes, her loud and unrestrained bursts of laughter, and a certain free and impudent air in every motion and every action, were indicative of anything rather than feminine reserve. Her face, when watched more closely, and for a longer time, might be seen, every now and then, resuming its natural expression, so to speak; and then her gaze fell lustreless, and with something of a sinister expression, on those about her; her swelling and ruby lips pressed together, and concealing two rows of ivory teeth, becoming pale and thin, seemed to express other passions, quite different and far deeper than before—scorn, contempt, hatred, irony, and sometimes grief. And then again, when you least expected it, a wild, unbridled joyousness would reappear in her countenance. You might have supposed that two souls, by turns, alternately dwelt in her body.

Lambert, drawing attention to her with a wink of his eye and a smile, said to Puccino: "And is this fair youth also, one of the first soldiers in Italy?"

"This lad, or, to speak more correctly, this lass (for I see thou art a good hound, and hast soon started the hare), wouldn't blanch with fear before any of us, I warrant you, with arms in her hand. She is the strangest creature you ever saw;—man, woman, soldier, courtesan — this last," he continued with a smile, "I fancy, most of all. But not one of your every-day damsels; for at one time, she is everybody's; at another, nobody's; at one time she laughs, and is as merry as anything, full of quips and jokes; at another, you daren't say to her—what charming eyes you have—without her loading you with a volume of abusive epithets: sometimes she is bland and caressing; at others, wayward as a ghost. I fancy she's a little turned. Some pretend to see beneath all this, wonderful things (for no one knows where she sprung from): they pretend that she is—that she is—I don't know what—they say so many things. For my part—to look at her face—I fancy she's of gipsy blood; but what is certain is, she is half cracked, if not wholly so."

At this instant, Signor John, who was impatient of remaining long at table, rose up, and with him the greater part of the guests, who went out with him into the court-yard. Some remained at the table; amongst the rest, Lambert, who was listening to Puccino, and the female who was laughing and coquetting with those about her. The young man, accustomed in Niccolo's house to the austere virtue and precision of the Piagnoni, with the pure image of Laodamia stamped upon his mind, and that of Lisa engraved on his heart, looked at her for some moments; but, though of an age when the passions are most easily inflamed, he regarded her with a feeling of repugnance, and was on the point of rising to depart.

"Stop a moment, Sforzino," exclaimed Captain

Cattivanza, who was sitting beside the female. "Stop; my lady Selvaggia wishes to make your acquaintance."

When he perceived that the youth showed no great inclination to be introduced to her, he called out:—

"Hollo! come here; and though you are a cub of the Piagnone breed, are you afraid of a pretty girl, as if she were the devil? or do you fear that her breath will give you the plague? Why, I hear say that in Florence, ever since they made roast meat of the friar Savonarola, the damsels of the yellow veil flaunt it more than ever; so it cannot be so mighty strange—"

Lambert, feeling irritated by the irony conveyed in these words, got up to go out, and said,—

"Plague take the courtesans, and whoever—"

But he could not finish his sentence, for all shouting out and exclaiming:—"Ugh! Piagnone; Bravo, Piagnone!" they cut short what he was about to say. At this uproar he turned back, for he was already at the door. Standing erect in front of the table, and fixing his eyes on Cattivanza, without any appearance of the anger which he felt, he said:

"To-day is the first time that I find myself in such honourable company, and therefore it is incumbent on me to be modest; and though you sport your jests on me, perhaps rather more than I like, yet neither for this will I be angry with you. I will only say, that as for my being a Piagnone, I am proud of it. With regard to being a follower of the friar Savonarola, would to God that I could boast of being so, as much as I wish I were; and to tell you the reason of it, in the plainest words possible,—it is because he aimed at combining with the glory of God the liberty of the city of Florence; instead of which, his enemies have reduced it to a state of slavery. I admit that he favoured courtesans but little, whereas they who put him to death, favour them more than enough. Perhaps you may think him wrong on this head; I think he was right; for all minds hold not the same opinions. And as to opinions, you must know, Captain Cattivanza, that I hold, that the Almighty has given to every man an understanding, without leaving any unprovided therewith, for the express purpose that every man may make use of his own. Had it been his intention that a single mind should serve for several individuals, he would not have taken so much trouble; and for all, who would have had to do without one, he would have placed in their heads pumpkin seeds, or any other rubbish that would have supplied the place of brains."

At this, many could not refrain from laughing; and Lambert, who appeared at first overcome by their ridicule, by little and little was gaining on the heart of every one of them.

"Since, then," he went on, "with regard to this matter of the understanding, God has given one also to me, suffer me to use it as it seems good to me. I know very well, that among soldiers, it is their custom to divert themselves with all the girls that come in their way; but yet no one can say, that whoever does not do so, ought not to be held for a good soldier and a brave man. And if any one should venture to maintain it, I could easily convince him of his error. Well then, being agreed on this point, that a man may be fit for something, and yet not entangle himself with courtesans, I trust you will be willing, Captain Cattivanza, and I say the same to all the honourable knights who are now my comrades, to hold me for a brave brother in arms, ready to execute your every command; but as to my being a Piagnone, and doing this thing or that, I pray you, leave that to me, and in all else consider me at your service, and ready to do your pleasure."

To confess one's opinions in face of the block and the axe, is probably, at times, less difficult than to profess them in the teeth of sneers and ridicule. By this we discover the heart that is truly lofty and noble; and such was Lambert's.

"Well, well," replied Cattivanza, half silenced and half angry, "I suppose you are right. That you know how to use your hands, we have seen, so that there is no dispute on that point. As for other matters, settle them as you list; I care little about that, and no one here will trouble you on that score; for, as God lives, thou art a brave youth. Come hither, let us drink, and be friends."

"With all my heart," rejoined Lambert, taking the hand his adversary offered, and then, one after another, that of all. Having filled their glasses, they vowed peace and amity, and Lambert was now higher in their esteem than ever.

Captain Puccino, while Lambert was speaking with so little respect of Signora Selvaggia and her admirers, was all the time giving him a hint, saying in an under tone,—"Mind, mind what you are about, Sforzino!" but now clapping him on the back, he added: "Thank God that you are a handsome looking fellow; for if anybody else had said half as much as you have, he would soon have learnt how many inches long the steel blade is, that my lady carries round her neck." And he pointed to a richly ornamented poniard that hung at her breast, suspended by a gold chain.

Puccino, however, was not quite right in his judgment respecting Selvaggia's thoughts. Lambert's words, instead of exciting her anger, had impressed on her countenance that deep and thoughtful expression, which we adverted to a while ago. During the whole of the conversation that passed, she had remained with her eyes cast down, and without opening her lips. But at this she raised her head, and frowning on Puccino, said:

"What do you know of what I was thinking? or whether he appears a handsome youth to me or no? and whether what he said causes me to be affronted or not? Don't you trouble your head about my matters! You have ever appeared to me an idiot; and now more than ever."

"There's a storm rising!" said Puccino, laughing, and taking Lambert by the arm; and still repeating: "A storm rising!"—"rainy weather!" led him out into the court-yard.

"Let him go and play the saint to his heart's content," said Cattivanza to the damsel; "but let us make a merry time of it, my darling. Ugh! those pretty roguish eyes! I declare I'm dying for love of you, my darling!"

And so saying, he was going to put his arms around her lithe and graceful form, but she responded to his endearments by a slap on the face, and the blow was not given in jest,

"Hands off, for I'm tired of this!" she said, rising up to go away.

"Oh! you are going to play the Piagnone, too! Why, if I were to see you make the sign of the cross, 'twould be the first time, truly!"

This reply of the captain's, however, was not heard by Selvaggia, who had hurried away without minding him any further. He too, with the rest, now retired; every one going to attend to his own affairs, as it was already becoming dusk; but he kept muttering: "Let Sforzino play the Piagnone as much as he will—curse him—but if only I see this mischief spreading, we shall have something to settle between us."

Two days after the camp was moved to Mantua, with the design of checking the Germans under

George Frundsberg, who, to the number of 15,000, were following their ancient custom of living at discretion, by plundering the Italians. Let it be observed that, in the present case, discretion is put for *indiscretion.* Signor John's bands, with few halts, and after a skirmish or two of little importance, arrived on the banks of the Po, near Governolo. Lambert, on the march, by proving himself a brave soldier, when opportunity presented itself, and when matters went on smoothly, a good-natured pleasant comrade, had acquired the general good-will of his companions, with whom he had several times, in a kindly mood, entered on the same topics, as they discussed that evening at the supper, in regard to Selvaggia.

As for her, she had followed in the wake of the army, but never riding in company, nor joining in conversation, with any one. Lambert saw her two or three times bound past him on an Arab palfrey, fleet and light as a stag, with a leathern jerkin on, and a Moorish javelin in her hand, and quickly disappear in the clouds of dust raised by the troops as they marched along. One day, when some German fusiliers endeavoured to check them, and it was necessary to drive them before them, he saw her, all on a sudden, emerge from the body of the arquebussiers; and passing close to his side, but without stopping, she said to him: "If I am not good for much as a woman, I am as a man;" and then off, like a shot.

A few days afterwards, the valiant but unfortunate John de Medici received a gunshot in his leg. He was conveyed to Mantua, and in a few days died. His troops deeply lamented the death of one, who had been the most eminent of their corps, more by his bravery than his rank. They clad themselves in sable-coloured uniform, and ever after had the name of the *Black Bands;* and, being always mindful of the directions and instructions of their former chief, they became the terror of their enemies, and were always victorious, wherever they appeared.

Lambert, who had nourished the hope that, by following the fortunes of Signor John, he would soon rise to distinction, so that he might honourably turn his thoughts once more to his beloved Lisa, and having added to the admiration he had long felt for him from the fame of his glorious deeds, a fresh and enthusiastic feeling of devotion, arising from the kind manner in which he had received him into his service, felt his death as a double loss, and knew not what course to take. Although Horatio Baglione had obtained the command of the Bands, and was a warrior of no mean reputation, yet Lambert feared the company might be broken up, or at any rate would lose much of their reputation; and, though that did not actually come to pass, his anticipations were not entirely wrong. He was relieved from his perplexity, however, by a strange encounter, that he had with Selvaggia.

He was not so dull, as not to have seen from the outset, that this girl had set her eyes on him, and that she entertained towards him a tender regard. He said to himself, with a smile : " I am no game for your net ! " imagining her only design to be, to attempt, as courtesans usually do, to extract money out of him. As on this point he felt pretty safe, he thought little more on the matter.

One evening, having strolled a short distance from his quarters, and sat down on the sandy bank of the river Po, he was watching the setting sun, as it slowly disappeared behind the umbrageous lines of poplars, that grew on the opposite side. He gazed in silence on the calm, majestic stream, as it glided on, presenting an ever-changing mirror, in which were reflected the overhanging trees and the bright effulgence of the declining orb. He recalled those sweet summer evenings he had passed on the banks of the Arno, when he wandered forth along its verdant margin, and saw the sun go down behind the hills of Artimino. He remembered that from those spots, as he turned round and looked toward the east, he had so many times viewed with admiration his beautiful and beloved Florence, lit up by the last rays of the departing sun, with its dark and embattled palaces, its innumerable towers, its bridges, and its churches. He saw, in fancy's eye, the great dome of Santa Maria del Fiore, and the golden ball which, when the sun-light is reflected on it, appears at a distance like a blazing star on its summit : he saw Giotto's mosaic belfry, the lofty turrets of the Palazzo, on whose top the lion rampant of the republic was turning about with the shifting of the wind; and thought to himself: "Thou hast bent, it is true, beneath many a storm, but there thou art still."

Poor Lambert! He did not know that such a boast was soon to come to an end for ever, together with that proud emblem. This fair picture of the fancy, formed of objects inanimate, received at once life and feeling from the images of Lisa—of Laodamia—of Niccolo—of his sons—of the companions of his childhood; from the recollection of words that he had said or heard, of looks, of marks of their regard, and of those slight attentions which attract little notice at the time, but which are for ever treasured up in the heart; from the memory, at once sad and fondly-cherished, of his aged mother, who at her last farewell had put such constraint on a mother's feelings, as even to veil, with a smile of hope, the secret presentiment, that told her she would never see her son again in this world. He had read in her last look this mournful impression; and, with a heart wrung with a kindred feeling, he too had feigned a hope that he little felt. Such remembrances now crowded on him, not unattended with some feelings of compunction and remorse, as he said: "And could you leave her? And what, if you should never see her again?" And placing his hands over his eyes, he gave vent to his feelings in a flood of tears.

Meantime, the vault of heaven was beginning to twinkle with a host of stars; and the fading twilight was just apparent in the western sky, by the streaks of orange-coloured light, on which the tops of the poplar trees seemed to rest, as they gently waved in the evening breeze.

Just at that instant he heard a light footstep, approaching very gently, along the sandy shore. On raising his head he saw a dark figure, muffled in a cloak, advancing towards him. "Ha!" said Lambert to himself in a tone of impatience, sorry to be disturbed in his delightful reverie; and he was on the point of moving away to avoid the person, but the figure came and sat down within two yards of him, and after a moment's silence, in a low, deep voice, said to him:—

"Tell me, young man, hast thou not left in thy fatherland some girl who loves thee, and whom thou dost love, more than aught else in the world beside? Wert thou not thinking of her just now? Answer me; and so may God comfort thee! answer me plainly!"

It was a woman's voice; and Lambert thought: "This surely is Selvaggia!" and the idea of a courtesan coming to break in upon his pure and lofty thoughts of his country—his mother—his Lisa—made him recoil with a sense of loathing, like one feels when, amidst beautiful and fragrant beds of flowers, a foul and hideous serpent is discovered coiled up and concealed. Besides, too, he could not rid himself of the suspicion, that her sudden appearance, at such a time, and in this solitary place, was a trap for him.

"Oh!" replied Lambert, in curt and somewhat haughty words, "why do you intrude on my privacy? Why concern yourself with my affairs?"

"Oh! I do not do so; I am not worthy to do it:—do I ask to do so? I see I have offended you —and God knows whether I meant to do so;—but I did not know how to begin to address you—and speak to you I must.—I hoped, by alluding to her, whom you bless with your love—I hoped you would forget, for a moment, that I was Selvaggia, and that you would listen to me for a minute without being angry. Oh, young man! to the reptiles, that crawl amid the reeds of the stagnant marsh, Heaven denies not its air and its sun;—and a being who stands before you, with her head bowed to the dust, and asks of you nothing but a kind word, will you spurn her from you with your foot?"

And so saying, Selvaggia bent her forehead to the ground, which was now wet with the dew.

"I mean you neither good nor harm, Signora," answered Lambert, still impressed with the opinion that these glowing words, these attitudes, and the voice choked with emotion, were but so much acting; "and if you want anything with me, be so good as to say it quickly; but let no word escape you touching any other lady—you understand me—as I'm not in a mood for it."

"I admit, I am not worthy so much as to take her name within my lips. Does this content you? Have you still in your mind some epithet of scorn, that you have not yet launched at me? If so, say it—

give vent to your thoughts—trample on her, who is come, lowly and trembling, to implore your pity, as the vilest worm would do, if speech and reason were given it, to turn itself to the Creator of the Universe. Oh! rejoice in your goodness—in your virtue; and, when you address yourself to your Heavenly Father, say to him: 'I thank thee, I am not as this woman!'"

The impression of Lambert's mind, with regard to this female, could not, however, prevail with him so far, but that these humble words, her manner, and the tone of voice in which they were uttered, touched his heart, and awoke in him a more favourable feeling, amounting almost to pity. With more kindness, therefore, in his manner, and more gentleness in his words, he said: "In God's truth, Signora, you astonish me! Spurn you!—trample on you! What mean you? Either you know what opinion I have of you, and of your mode of life; and then, if it is distressing to you to hear it, why come you to me to induce me to repeat it? or else you have no dread of this opinion, nor even think you deserve it; and why then do you care about it?"

"Because I do know it, and because I well know, through what miseries I have passed, which have brought me to deserve it; for this reason I care for it; for this reason I have thrown myself at your feet. For the first time these many years, have I looked on the face of a man, that has appeared to me, not that of a brute, of a wild beast

—oh! what do I say, miserable wretch that I am! that has appeared to me like the form, the voice of an angel, bending down to my abject misery, and holding out a hand to raise me up! Oh, if I had met with you, when I was fifteen! But instead —a spirit from hell—entered, methinks, into a human form, to make me his victim! Oh, young man! God alone has the right to spurn and to punish, because He alone knows all; and therefore is it, that I feel that He has at last felt pity for my sufferings and misery, and has ordained that I should meet you! But you know not the dreadful tale! did you know it, you would shed tears with me. Oh, refuse not to listen to it! The delay will not be long—few words will suffice—for after so many years, you are the first man to whom I have attempted to speak of penitence, without the fear of encountering fresh scorn, and being loaded with fresh insults."

Lambert thought—Here's another of the usual stories of this class. But having no reason to deny, what he was so earnestly entreated to grant, he said—

"If all you tell me is true, say on, Signora; I will listen to you."

"If it's true!" and the poor girl, striking her forehead with the palms of her hands, remained silent for a moment. Then shaking her head, she said, in a voice scarcely audible—"Do men believe courtesans? You are right," she continued, turning to Lambert, "this wound to my feelings I deserve. But you shall see, whether I tell you what is true. Whether your scorn lies heavy on me or not, you know;—you do not doubt that, do you?—And yet there is something which you do not know, and that I might have hidden from you, that would render me, if possible, more abject and more vile in your sight. Nevertheless, listen to what I am about to tell you—I am not a Christian! . . . .—An Hungarian Jew was my father.—My father?—ought I to call him by such a name? Nay, rather I ought to say my bitterest and most cruel enemy! It is owing to him, that I am what I am; for him, I have lost country, relatives, friends.—Has a strumpet relatives, friends, and country?"—She paused a moment; and then, in a still more pathetic tone, continued: "And came I not forth pure from my mother's bosom? did I not receive from God a heart capable of love and kind affections, and endued with virtuous aspirations, as well as other beings?—Who robbed me of this treasure?—Who degraded and debased these divine gifts, which once were mine, which were the portion of good and of felicity that was assigned to me as my share, by the Omnipotent?—Who, I say?"—

And here she remained silent for a moment, gazing on Lambert with flashing eyes; then seizing his arm, she went on, with trembling voice and quivering lips—

"Give ear, young man, and lend faith to what I say, if you can believe so horrible a tale. I was alone that night—alone in my chamber—my mother was no more. Oh, had she but been alive! she would have protected her child!—They knocked at the door—I heard my father's voice; he called me—I opened it. Some man was with him; he seemed to be a prince by his dress, and his lofty presence. I looked at him, terrified and alarmed. My father disappeared—the door closed.—He had trafficked in his child's honour, and made merchandise of his own blood!—Need I recount the tale of my after miseries? You, who are virtuous, noble, high-minded, and generous, could you comprehend, how one still lives on after such horrors? how, by degrees, the hard skin forms over the wounds of shame and dishonour? how at last, woman, once shrinking and gentle, can trample all sense of modesty under foot, have no longer any heart but for pleasure, no pursuit but the search for it, and for the wild and giddy joy, that drowns her sensibilities? I horrify you—I see it. But tell me—be you my judge—where could I look for aid—where for shelter and protection? How was it possible to resist, to overcome, to save myself? And yet, after having been betrayed, loaded with infamy, and at last driven from home an outcast, and trampled under foot by all, if ever I raise my voice to ask for pity—if I hold out my hand, hoping that some friend will come to aid me, I meet only with hatred, scorn, and insult: every one hurls me back again to shame and degradation! My misery, my tears are but pastime to those, who deign for a moment to listen to me.—O God of heaven! what did I do—what was my crime, that I should come into the world to endure such sufferings?—Oh, young man!—you, who have no sins, that press heavy on your soul—you, who are beautiful and brave, and virtuous and honourable—who, in the midst of dangers and hardships, repose on the thought of those who are dear to you, did you but know, what it is to be born with a fond heart, that longs and yearns to be loved, and yet never is—no, not loved by a single human being!—not even by one's own father.—Oh! if you knew this wretchedness, you would wonder that I still preserve in my countenance—aye, and may be in my heart—anything that is human!—you would wonder why I do not rush, like a wild beast, upon all I meet of the cruel and heartless race, that has betrayed me, that has hurled me into this abyss of misery, and then withholds from me every source of comfort and relief!—Could I be told, that there is yet in the world a heart, that would receive me, that would dry my tears—if they should say to me: There is yet a being on earth who will love thee, if you can but deserve their love!—O God of goodness! it would be too great a happiness for me!—such joy would be too much for me!—I would search through the world to find out that being!—If I saw them on the other side of a lake of fire, I would plunge in to reach them! I would embrace their knees!—What could I offer to repay them for such bliss?

what could I do to render myself worthy of them! —Oh, young man, if you knew, it is but little that I ask!—Thy heart, I see, is fixed on a worthy object; but you love your war-horse too, nor would you harm anything—you love your hound!—Oh! after your horse and your hound, do not disdain me, if I implore you to bestow one thought on me: let one look of yours fall on the poor Selvaggia—only say to her—*Poor girl, I pity you!*—

"O God! he does not even answer me!" cried the poor creature, and burst into tears.

CHAPTER XIV.

If Lambert delayed to reply, it was from a very different reason to what Selvaggia supposed. Her words, which he felt he could not help believing, had awoke in his heart a sentiment of deep and tender pity. But a lingering remnant of suspicion, which he could not entirely suppress, induced him to be on his guard, and restrained him from showing all the compassion he felt. So that, striving to maintain a firm tone of voice, and an unmoved countenance, he said:—"Do you ask for pity, Signora? Who could deny it to such sad and heart-rending miseries as yours? But you are too severe on yourself; for a creature formed after the likeness of God, ought not to put itself on a level with the brutes."

"I, too severe on myself? How can you say that, if I fail in obtaining even that little I ask of you? Was it such a great thing for you merely to say: *Poor Selvaggia, I accept you as my slave?*—to bestow upon me a momentary bliss, a passing joy, by a word that should come straight from your heart? Instead of which, all I get is,—*You are too severe upon yourself!*—Goodness is beautiful to behold; but oh! she is austere and haughty."

"No, Selvaggia, to goodness I can lay no claim; and much less, am I haughty and austere to you. I pity your miseries in my very soul, and were it in my power to rid you of them, your sufferings would soon be over. But that which I cannot, the help of God can do, if you but turn to Him. I have not indeed answered you according to your desire, because it is not in my power to comply with it. Ask me not why, Selvaggia. Remember only, that a noble spirit can always rise superior to its destiny;—that virtue never departs entirely from the human heart, except by its own express will, and till that is the case, the door is ever open, by which it may return. You may rise and be yourself again, you may yet hope on earth to meet with love and affection, if you wish it. I have now listened to you;—what I could say, I have said,—we must now part. May God grant you that happiness and that peace, which I pray that He may. Farewell."

Lambert hastened away with rapid step, and not before it was time. This conversation had agitated and unsettled him; he felt that for him, the safest course was to fly from her. Her beauty, her misfortunes, her faults, her very remorse, rendered her interesting, and made her appear a singular, and, by no means, an ordinary being. In a word, it was best for him to fly from her; and Lambert in a few minutes had returned to his quarters.

The girl followed him with her eye, so long as the feeble light of the stars would enable her to distinguish his receding form. When he was out of sight, she felt in her heart a sense of desolation and solitude; she seemed to be left, the sole surviving being on the wide world. The wicked, thought she, laugh at me, if I but attempt to speak of the hell that rages within me. This man, the virtuous, the good, sees me at his feet, breathing despair, and says, *Turn to God!* and so leaves me! O gracious God! since Thou alone knowest my sufferings, Thou alone hearest my weepings, why hast Thou forgotten me? O poor unhappy being that I am! I must then die, without ever having known the sweet joy of being loved!" And distracted, or rather frenzied at the thought, she ran along the bank of the river like one crazed.

All at once she stopt, as if a new idea had flashed across her mind.—Am I sure that he really believed me?—And pausing a moment to reflect, she exclaimed, her aspect changing all at once at this unexpected gleam of hope:—" No, no, he did not believe me,—he thought I was deceiving him.—Oh! if he could have been certain that I was telling him the truth—he would not have replied to me nor left me thus.—Oh, I know him, he is generous!—he is noble!—there is still hope then?—I thank Thee, gracious God!—(and she fell on her knees, with her eyes and arms directed towards heaven)—that Thou hast so soon received my prayer, that Thou hast restored the treasure to my heart, the inestimable treasure of still being able to hope. Yes, the day will come, when you shall believe me. You shall then see, that I did not deceive you;—the day will come, when you shall say to me: Poor Selvaggia! at last I believe thee, and care for thee!—It will not be love—no—should I ever dream of gaining that? I, a vile, miserable, abject creature,—the love of that angel? What woman on earth is worthy of it?—Ah! yes, there must be one!—Well, I will love her too; I will be her slave, since she is dear to my master—perhaps, so, they will endure my presence—perhaps I shall prevail with them, not to drive me away—perhaps when I am approaching my last hour,—when they go and tell him:—Poor Selvaggia is dying,—who knows? perhaps he will come to my bed-side, and if I have voice enough left to speak to him, I shall ask him to call me *his*, before I die!—On my cold and icy forehead, I shall then feel him press his hand, and he will say, *My Selvaggia*,—and then, I shall feel no more—I shall be dead!"

At these thoughts the poor girl was fairly beside herself. God knows how long she remained in this condition. When she came to herself again, the dawn was already peeping out in the eastern sky; she recognised the banks of the Po, and the soldiers' tents, and looking round in a state of bewilderment, she asked herself:—"What am I doing here? Where am I? Who am I?"—A voice not far from her (there were at the time some soldiers going towards the river to water their horses,) replied with a loud burst of laughter: "Why, thou art the court-lady of the Black Bands; that's who you are!"

The poor woe-begone girl uttered a loud cry, and fled hastily away.

A year after, in the month of April, the armada of Filippino Doria was sailing about midday along the shores of Amalfi, the prows in the direction of Capri, and Cape Campanella. The fleet consisted of fifteen galleys, with which the nephew of Andrea was guarding the bay of Naples, to prevent the passage of any succours to the Imperialists, who were there besieged by Lautrec. The viceroy Ugo di Moncada, wishing at all hazards to free the approaches by sea, had determined to engage Filippino, and came up with his galleys, in which he had embarked the flower of the nobility and of the Spanish troops, in search of the enemy; the latter acquainted with his design, were prepared to receive the attack.

The naval tactics, the shape of the vessels, and everything else is changed now-a-days. The galley of the middle ages has disappeared from every sea. In the dock of the port of Genoa, one still floats in a retired corner, without masts, left to rot away, all dismantled and in ruins; the summer heat, the frosts of winter, and the rain, will in a few years have entirely destroyed and obliterated this sole symbol of the departed greatness and glory of Genoa. Why do they not attempt to save, at least, this last of those swift-sailing vessels, in which, for so many ages, brave and victorious, they swept the seas of Italy and the Levant? O Genoese, will you consent to the loss of these monuments of your glory, which is the glory of Italy too, which is ours? Since you have by your valour added your share to her triumphs, preserve the memory, maintain the last relics, of it. The honour of Italy demands it of you, the Italians implore it of you, O men of Genoa!

The fleet under Filippino was bearing slowly out to sea, driven by a light easterly wind, which blew obliquely against the large mizzen sails, all unfurled to receive its soft, intermitting breezes. The suspended oars remained raised above the water, and the galleys at one moment dipping broadside downwards, as the wind impelled the sails, at another, righting themselves, when it fell, ploughed the deep with a slow and stately undulating motion, and were quietly preparing for the engagement.

No bustle, no confusion was observable in consequence of these preparations. The soldiers and sailors had not, for a long time, looked upon a fight, as anything else than certain victory. On the prow, where the tremendous causeway cannon between four pieces of lesser calibre opened its spacious mouth all black with smoke, and turned towards the enemy, the bombardiers, after charging it with the ball, which sometimes weighed sixty pounds, sat talking together; and one or two, from the heat of the sun, placed some covering over their eyes, and in this way got a short sleep.

The arquebussiers, who when in actual engagement, used to range themselves on the platform, which covered the artillery, called the forecastle, were standing all equipped in their corslets and cuisses, and with their helmets on, leaning on their guns or on the frames that supported them, whilst in their hands they held the lighted cord, ready to fire. Behind them were other soldiers with pikes, halberts, partisans, and all kinds of weapons; and with swords, some of which were sickle-shaped, some like scimitars, and others long and pointed. Some carried long two-handed swords with serpentine blades; some bore shields and bucklers; which, besides serving for defence, could also do considerable damage, with the sharp and strong boss, that was fixed in the middle. There was to be seen, in fine, every variety of arms and armour, which the sturdy arms of our forefathers, and their stout frames, could wield or wear, without fatigue, for whole days, beneath the strokes of a burning sun; and which the youth of our days, wrapped in their robe-de-chambre, and stretched upon their couch à la Voltaire, look up at, as they hang suspended in their halls, the dusty trophies of departed glory.

The causeway of the galley, a space about seven feet wide, which extended from stem to stern between the two longitudinal lines of rowers, was also filled with soldiers, who, as a rear-guard, stood ready to rush into the places of those who fell in front, or, when victorious, in the boarding might leap on to the enemy's ship. The rowers, five to each oar, their arms and sometimes the whole body to the waist being naked, and bound to the bench on which they sat, with chains that were never unriveted, except after death, were for the most part Turkish captives, criminals condemned to the galleys, and prisoners of war (an atrocious custom!); and on Andrea's galleys, they were principally Spaniards; for as many as he could get into his power, he consigned to the oar; for above all people, he hated their nation.

For these wretched galley-slaves, the impending battle was an ordinary event; a game, in which life was the stake; if they lost it, they escaped from infinite miseries; if they did not, they too enjoyed in some degree the fruits of the victory; since their cruel masters, on these occasions, were bountiful in their distribution of better food and wine.

The courage, however, which these unhappy creatures displayed on the approach of battle, was, more than anything else, the profound resignation of despair. Whether the balls of the enemy's artillery swept through their crowded ranks, or pouring in a broadside caused the vessel to founder; or whether, as often happened, the vessel was set on fire and became a burning mass, they had no prospect but death. Defenceless and unable, chained as they were, in any way to help themselves, without feeling any of those stormy passions, which cause death to appear less terrible, could they have any love of country, any zeal in the contest, any pride in victory, any sentiment of military honour? Not even that sanguinary and brutal instinct, that urges on man against man, in the fury of the combat, not even this wild delight could they taste. Whilst the soldiers, the sailors, the freemen on board, could move about, run hither and thither, fight, and aid in some way in gaining the victory, or effecting their escape, it was their lot to row and to hold their peace; to suffer themselves to be killed or wounded; ever rowing, and ever silent; for, for every action, inconsistent with the degradation of a slave, the lash, and, at times, the dagger of the overseer awaited them.

On the poop, which rose obliquely, with its carved sides, adorned with arabesque, and not unfrequently gilded, and which was covered with an awning, with rich curtains and tassels hanging down, supported by rings suspended from poles that went right round; here, on this elevated position stood the captain of the galley, and the principal officers of the troops on board. At the extreme end, projecting a little distance from the body of the vessel, were suspended three huge lamps, which were lighted at night. Here floated the banner of Genoa, the red cross upon a white ground; and this same device figured on the bannerols and streamers, which in great numbers adorned the sail-yards and masts of the galley.

Arms, oars, cables, galley-slaves, sailors, soldiers, officers, everything was ready and all at their post; the greater part keeping their eye on the scuttle of the mainmast, whence a sailor on the look-out had to shout *Get ready!* as soon as he caught sight of the enemy's fleet. The vast cerulean expanse reflected on its deep bosom the dark tint of the oars, the lengthy sides of the galleys, the gildings of the prows, the white sails, the glittering arms, and the various colours of the flags and banners; and these reflected hues appeared more vivid from contrast with the white-crested waves, which were raised by the ploughing of the keels through the waters.

Five galleys, at a distance from each other of about fifty yards, formed the line of battle. Three took a wider range, in order to close in on the flank or rear of the enemy, after the engagement had commenced. Several smaller vessels, admirably equipped, accompanied the fleet to do what damage they could with discharges of musketry and arquebusses.

On the forecastle of the admiral's ship stood Lambert, with a morion on his head, in which was displayed a long feather of the colour of the amaranth. His body, his arms, and thighs were encased in burnished steel, with golden stripes. His capacious hose, extending over the knee, and drawn tightly on the leg, were of the same colour as the plume of his helmet. On his arm, a shield lined with quilted velvet, and in his right hand a broad sword, about the breadth of a span near the hilt, strong and sharp at the point, with an inscription, *Præmium virtutis*,—a weapon that he had gained by his valiant achievements; for during the period that we have skipped over, he had been neither amusing himself, nor remaining with his hands idle.

Even before his nocturnal meeting with Selvaggia, which we have related, he felt induced, as we have said, to seek his fortune elsewhere. After listening to her tale, and discovering her ardent temperament, and seeing with what difficulty she would be diverted from her purpose of making him her own at all hazards, he deemed it the safest and most honourable course to quit the camp; and at once taking leave of Horatio Baglione, he sallied forth on the following morning from his quarters.

Had he been disposed to join the Imperialist forces, he might easily have arranged to do so. But he regarded the fortunes of Florence as indissolubly linked with those of France. He thought that the aim of Charles V. was to become the absolute master of Italy, whilst that of Francis I. and the French was to give her liberty. Poor Lambert! it is easily seen that he was still but a youth!

The most renowned Italian captain who followed the fortunes of France at that period, was doubtless Andrea Doria. Lambert in a few days was at Genoa, obtained service under his banner, and embarked on board of one of the galleys, which were on the point of sailing, to look out for and engage with the armada, which Ugo di Moncada, viceroy of Naples, was bringing from Spain to the Neapolitan shores. In the battle, in which this latter was defeated and his fleet dispersed, Lambert, under the eyes of Andrea, was the first to board the admiral's ship, and received as a reward for this gallant deed the handsome sword, which he now wore, waiting to encounter the same enemy a second time.

In the short time he had passed with Signor John, he had written once to his mother and to Niccolo; another letter he had sent from Genoa before embarkation; but at that time there were no regular posts, as there are now; and only once had he been able, after a long interval, to receive a letter in reply from Niccolo. Although living thus, without any certain tidings of what most interested him, was in his case peculiarly distressing, he consoled himself with thinking what joy it would be, to return some day unexpectedly, and present himself before them, worthy to offer his hand to Lisa.

These brief notices must suffice to fill up the too long chasm in Lambert's career. We return now to the fleet under Filippino.

The sun was descending to the west, and the Genoese admiral, thinking that the enemy would not show himself for that day, was about to give the signal for returning to Salerno, when from the scuttle of the galley on which Lambert was, a prolonged cry was heard,—A sail to the North West! A dull heavy sound, an universal hubbub, a bustling, but without confusion, amongst the galley-slaves and soldiers, followed this announcement; and at the same moment was heard the loud sonorous voice of every commander, giving his final orders. By means of a rope, that was fastened to the top of the mainmast of the admiral's ship, which was in the middle of the line, was rapidly hoisted the flag of the Doria, which was made fast, as it unfurled, and waved with the motion of the wind. A general and simultaneous shout of the whole fleet, saluting this signal for action, resounded over the sea, and was re-echoed by the mountains of Salerno.

The oars, which till now were suspended and motionless, were all at once plunged into the water; all the galleys, as if moved by a single will, dashed rapidly forward all together, like an arrow from a bow, leaving behind the white and foaming waves. After the first sail, a second appeared in view, coming from behind the rocks of the promontory of Campanella; then another and another. At last, in about half-an-hour, the two fleets were ranged opposite one another, at the distance of little more than a cannon shot.

Filippino Doria, a man of middle height, spare in figure, all muscle and sinew, stood on the poop, on the star-board side of the galley, beneath the standard; the position which, as Admiral, he would occupy during the engagement; covered with magnificently gilt armour, he showed only his face bronzed by the sun, and hardened by exposure to the wind, and the rough life of a seaman. In his features, he was the genuine type of the hardy race of Genoese sailors.

And a sailor indeed, or rather a most accomplished seaman, the nephew of Andrea might be called; for in the school of this famous commander, he had not only learnt to direct the evolutions of a fleet, but to direct a ship's course also, like a common pilot. And if we notice this quality in him, it is, because at that time, in many countries (among the French for instance) there were frequently appointed as commanders in naval battles, fine gentlemen, who were accustomed only to military tactics on land; and who, leaving entirely to the steersmen the care of navigating the vessels, reserved to themselves merely the chief direction of the action, having no other thought in the engagement, but fighting bravely at the head of their soldiers, just as they would have done from the battlements of a citadel.

By the side of Filippino were the vice-admiral and Monsignor de Croy, sent by Lautrec on board the fleet, with a reinforcement of three hundred arquebussiers; other officers stood in a less commanding position, near the first starboard oar, which was worked by seven galley-slaves instead of five (and there were the same number on both sides to the first four oars from the poop, who gave the stroke to all the rest), and on the larboard side, also at the post he was to keep during the action, was the ship's captain. With knitted brows and eyes fixed on the enemy's vessels, they were all watching their manœuvres with a grave, calm, and determined expression, which the bravest men do not acquire in the midst of dangers, except after long experience.

The chief superintendent of the galley-slaves was at the head of the causeway, near the poop, with a strong lash under his arm, a broad and sharp scimitar at his side, without a sheath, and his arms crossed. He had on a helmet of rusty iron, a coat of mail, and large breeches; his feet were entirely bare.

Eight others, subordinate officers under his direction, were pacing up and down the causeway, observing, with slow and piercing glance, whether every galley-slave was attentive to his duty; in case any one relaxed his exertions at the oar, they were seen describing, with the most rapid motion, the figure of an 8 in the air with their lash, which descended with a whizzing sound on the back of the culprit, and at the same time on that of his nearest comrades; for, as for being very nice in taking aim, they did not so much as give it a thought. All this was done in the midst of the most profound silence, as the rigid discipline of the Genoese galleys did not allow the use of words for any purpose, when the officers were at their post, awaiting an engagement; nor was any other sound heard, but that of the alternate strokes on the water, the creaking of the rowlocks beneath the grating of the oars, and the rattle of the chains, which clanked ever and anon, as the galley-slaves moved heavily backwards and forwards on their benches. Though no one spoke, the chief superintendent every moment directed his eye first to the captain, then to Filippino, as if expecting an order, that he fancied at that moment would be opportune.

In order to understand what we are now about to advert to, it is necessary to mention that one of the final preparations in a ship, before the commencement of an action, was that of raising two structures in the form of barricades, which divided it transversely—one at the prow, behind the artillery; the other at the mainmast; they were called bastions. Each of these bastions was composed of two partition-walls, raised to a height of four yards, supported by pillars, which were fixed on the causeway and in the sides of the vessel. The space between the two walls, which was about two feet, was filled with cables, rolled and twisted up, and the side toward the prow was faced with ropes of straw. By this means they stopped, or at any rate broke the force of, the cannon-balls, which, sweeping along the side of the galley, would have caused a terrible destruction among the rowers. Or in case of their being boarded, they might, behind these defences, prolong their resistance; and sometimes, rallying and renewing the attack, recover the part of the galley which the enemy had taken possession of.

The superintendent then, as we have said, frequently turned to his superiors, till the captain, knowing his thoughts, said to Filippino :—

“ If your Highness thinks fit, we will raise the prow bastion.”

The admiral gave his assent by a nod of the head; and the superintendent uttering a loud and prolonged—oh! which called the attention of the sailors, and was the signal for them to attend to the word of command, exclaimed: "Now then for the prow bastion!"

At that sound, there arose at the forepart of the galley an active and bustling movement among the seamen, but without any confusion; and in a moment were reared up the supporting pillars, the partition walls, and the cables in bundles, which were arranged in the manner we have described. In five minutes all was completed, and the men who had performed this task, returned to their posts, and remained in the same immoveable attitude as before.

A Capuchin friar, the chaplain of the vessel, had in the meantime put on his stole, and standing up in the midst of the poop with his ritual in his hand, recited certain prayers; after which he raised his hand, and blessed with a large cross the galley-slaves and the soldiers; whilst all, from the admiral to the humblest cabin-boy, made the sign of the cross. Filippino then, in a loud voice, called out, "Courage, my lads!—with the help of God, and of St. John the Baptist, the day will be ours.—Eight galleys against six! See, see, how they come on! By St. Catino, they don't take more than four oars' distances at a stroke!"*

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* A galley, when served in first-rate style by the rowers, with a full complement, ought to take six distances or intervals at every stroke; that is, the first oar from the stern, and so on of

And Filippino and his officers could not help laughing at the unsteady and irregular motion of the oars of the enemy's galleys.

"Now then," continued the Doria, "I expect every man to do his duty, as heretofore, for the honour of Genoa, and the service of his most Christian Majesty! Superintendent, send a cask round among the rowers."

The order was instantly obeyed; and the subalterns carried round a keg of wine, which being conveyed to every bench of rowers, who drank of it in their turn, produced far more effect than any ideas ever could about the honour of Genoa, or the service of the French king.

"Now, Monsieur," said Filippino, to the captain commanding the French arquebussiers, "get your men ready; for as sure as God lives, I intend that we should drink a cup of Alicant on board the royal vessel of Spain."

"*Ce ne sera pas moi qui y ferai faute*," replied the Frenchman, gaily; and turning to his men, after a few words to encourage them, raised aloft his drawn sword, and shouted the national cry of "*Vive le Roi!*" and to this cry was joined that of —"Genoa for ever!"—uttered by the troops of Filippino: and at a distance, the cry of "*Viva España!*" was raised by the men in the enemy's ships. The two fleets meantime had approached

all the rest, ought to be dipped into the sea at the very spot where the sixth oar in front of it had previously struck the surface of the water.

within half cannon shot, and Filippino giving a signal to the man at the helm, who had his eye fixed on him, and seemed to read his every thought, and instantaneously execute his wishes, was bringing his vessel right athwart the Spanish admiral's ship, not so directly opposite as to be exposed to a broadside, and not so obliquely as not to be able to rake it with their guns, at the shortest possible diagonal. The Spaniards too aimed at forestalling the same advantage, but less expert and ready, they could not move their vessel with the same readiness and precision.

"Bombardiers, to your guns, and make ready!" shouted Filippino. Then turning to the chief of the galley-slaves, he cried, "Row, all!"

The officer addressed sprung into the middle of the causeway, whirling his lash aloft, and shouting at the top of his voice:—

"Row away! row away!"

The same cry was taken up by his subalterns, who kept all the time discharging a shower of lashes, right and left, on the rowers; whilst they, redoubling their efforts and the rapidity of their movements, might be seen bending their backs and straining their arms, till the very muscles, swelling with their exertions, seemed to glide backwards and forwards beneath the skin, and the vessel, driven forward with a renewed and vigorous impulse, skimmed over the waves, like a sledge upon a frozen lake.

Filippino was all eye, and seeing the moment was come, rushed to the helm, and forcing it round, caused the vessel to veer in the very direction he wanted, and then cried, "Fire!" when a tremendous discharge of five pieces at the prow, seemed to produce, as if by magic, a thick, white cloud, which hid, for a moment, everything in front of the vessel. Filippino, who was prevented by the intervening smoke from seeing the enemy, bent over the sides, with evident impatience; since he could not ascertain the effect of his shots. But soon the motion of the wind dissipated the smoke; and the Spanish admiral's ship appeared lurching from the weight of its foremast, which, shivered and splintered down to its very foot, had fallen, partly upon the rowers, and partly in the sea. The sailors, however, had quickly cut it away with hatchets; and letting it drift, the ship righted herself, and began in her turn to fire, concealing herself in clouds of smoke, which rose up in dense volumes, whirling about, sometimes dark, sometimes of a whitish colour, and sometimes appearing, from the opposite rays of the setting sun, all golden and transparent at their edges.

"Genoa for ever! and go ahead, for the flag-ship is ours!" shouted Filippino, joyful at this auspicious commencement, and at seeing all his ships skilfully managed, and assailing the enemy with a rapid and well-directed fire; though they too were not wanting to their duty. The musketry poured forth a continual storm of balls from both sides; so that very soon, the clear blue sky was overcast by a thick and reddish haze, in which the sun's disc appeared to be floating, shorn of its beams, and stained with an ensanguined hue, as if composed of liquid copper.

The admiral's ship kept going ahead; bounding along rapidly, and thundering from her prow with a heavy fire; for Filippino designed to make short work of it, by coming alongside the Spanish flag-ship, and sinking her, if he could, by dashing against her with the beak of his ship, or else to take her by boarding.

The air resounded with the loud and continual reports, which, however, did not prevent their hearing the incessant whizzing of the balls, that flew past their side, or overhead, in shoals; and sometimes struck the vessel, whistling among the masts, the sail-yards, or the ship's sides, and breaking off splinters or fragments; but without as yet doing any serious injury.

At last, however, a large ball from a causeway cannon came sweeping along amid the timbers of the prow bastion with a loud crash, and striking the galley obliquely, carried away, crushing and mutilating them in its passage, the limbs of all the galley slaves it came in contact with.

The neighbours of these unfortunate creatures, bespattered with the blood and palpitating entrails of their companions, who either lay dead, all mangling and bleeding, or who almost so, had sunk down and were uttering piercing moans, seemed to relax their stroke, just when it was most important to render it as rapid and vigorous as possible; and some even yelled forth shrieks of horror and despair.

"Hollo! for God's sake!" shouted Filippino to the superintendent, furiously brandishing his sword; and the latter too, equally exasperated, advanced with his satellites towards these unfortunates, not with the lash, but with his scimitar; and now with the blade, now with the edge, he dealt furious blows on their bare backs; shouting all the while:—

"Row, you scoundrels!—I'll teach you to be afraid.—Forward! forward! The bung in your mouth,* every man of you! and then bellow, if you can!—"

Enforcing his words with blows from the blade or edge of his weapon, he had soon stopt all their mouths, and the stroke of the oars was plied with renewed vigour.

Filippino was constantly at the helm, irritated at not being able (owing to the thick smoke, and also because the sky, now that the sun had gone down, was becoming darker and darker) to see the Spanish flag-ship very distinctly, and the precise point at which he intended to strike her with his ship's beak.

But fortune, who seemed inclined to favour him, displayed to his view all at once, in a part from which the smoke had for a moment cleared off, the top of the mainmast of the enemy's galley, around which was fluttering and streaming to the wind, the large yellow and crimson pennon of Spain. That was enough for him to calculate the precise position of the forecastle; he twisted the helm furiously round, at the same time calling out,—"Now then for the boarding!" a very necessary signal, that every man might make his footing firm, and be ready to leap on to the enemy's vessel, availing themselves of the confusion at the instant of the collision.

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* In moments of great danger the galley-slaves were compelled to hold a piece of cork between their teeth, which hung round their necks by a piece of string, to prevent them from exciting the fears of the soldiers and mariners by their cries.

A moment of terrible suspense ensued; the lashes descended thicker and more unmercifully on the galley-slaves, and the vessel advanced more rapidly; it was altogether a state of indescribable anxiety to the combatants; and at last came a terrible collision, with a crashing, and a dull creaking sound, from the straining of every timber in the vessel, which recoiled, as if it had dashed against a rock, upon driving its beak-head against the forecastle of the enemy's galley. The waves beneath dashed up, and swept over the two vessels with their white and crested foam. Many, though they stood all ready for the shock, staggered, and fell headlong into the water: the sailyards, cables, oars, all became entangled and dashed together, and in the general crash were broken, and flew into a thousand pieces; from the scuttles of the masts, filled with arquebussiers, the rattling of the balls became more and more frequent, and on both sides all who could fight approached the point where, by the contact of the two galleys, it was possible, though not easy, to pass from one to the other. It was here that the most furious and deadly conflict was waged with weapons of all kinds,—swords, daggers, poniards, and huge heavy axes; it was altogether a most bloody and obstinate struggle, a hand-to-hand fight,—pushing, driving, falling, rising, rushing, thrusting!—a grappling in mortal strife, which became every moment more terrific and more murderous, partly owing to the increasing darkness of the night, and the narrowness and unsteadiness of their footing, and partly to the increasing agitation of the waves, which, rising by little and little with a fresh breeze that had sprung up after sunset, came dashing on with lofty and threatening crests, and bristling angrily with their curling tops, furiously lashed the sides and swept over the decks of the rocking and tossing vessels.

To light up this infernal scene, the incessant flashing of the cannon and musketry served in part, and the lanthorns in the ships' sterns, which had been lit with the approach of darkness. But to this dim and uncertain light, another was soon added that was bright and continuous, proceeding from the conflagration of a Spanish galley, that became in a short time one vast body of flame, shooting up over the sea, now high, now low, from the alternate swelling and sinking of the waves, on whose bosom this vast mass of flame was reflected, waving and disporting itself in a thousand forms.

This vessel was about thirty or forty yards from the two that were lashed alongside each other, and shot up a most intense glare of light, accompanied with a fierce heat; whilst, to complete the horror of the scene, the yells and cries of the wretched galley-slaves could be distinctly heard, who, chained to their benches, felt their flesh being roasted, without the power to unlock their fetters, and gradually perished by a lingering and horrible death; neither the sailors nor the soldiers, who had got off in small boats, or had escaped by swimming, caring about their fate or attempting to aid them. But neither this terrible spectacle, nor the danger of the probable and imminent explosion of the powder magazine in the burning ship, checked in the slightest degree the fury of the conflict, that was raging between the Genoese and Spanish galleys; above which there flew numberless flakes of fire, and clouds of thick and noxious smoke, such as vessels bedaubed with pitch give forth when burning.

Filippino had no sooner struck the enemy's galley, than, delivering the helm to the steersman, he rushed with Monsieur de Croy and his officers to the spot where the fight was hottest, and all gave eminent proofs of personal courage.

Lambert, who was standing on the forecastle, with his servant Maurice by his side, and surrounded by several French arquebussiers, had observed amongst them one, who had stationed himself by his side, and who, instead of wearing like his companions a steel cap, had on a morion, which concealed the whole face. He had not time, however, to observe him more minutely, as the galleys, encountering one another, commenced the conflict we have been describing, and in which Lambert was one of the foremost to join. And as there were with him not a few soldiers, who had served under John de Medicis, in his Bands, Lambert advanced with the cry,—"Signor John for ever! The Black Bands to the rescue!" as if animating his comrades to show themselves worthy of their fame; and whenever he aimed a successful blow, some of them would shout:—"Long live the brave Sforzino!" Thus they mutually encouraged one another to bear themselves valiantly.

After a long contest, and infinite bloodshed, they succeeded at last in getting the better of the enemy. They had beaten them back, and then rushing on in a crowd, boarded their vessel. And here their rage and fury rose to a still higher pitch, if possible: disputing inch by inch the quarter-deck of the galley, which, all slippery with blood, and rocking to and fro by the agitation of the sea, seemed as if it would every moment glide from under the feet of the combatants, they were one moment pressing forward and locked in close conflict, another, recoiling and beaten back, and not unfrequently falling headlong from the ships' sides into the sea; where many, from the weight of their armour, or from the waves sweeping over them, soon sunk to the bottom. Many also died in the water from wounds inflicted on them by men, who were on the look out in small boats, to dispatch their enemies and rescue their friends; and some few succeeded in saving themselves by catching hold of the bow, or seizing an oar, of some small skiff. In the hollows and on the crests of the waves you might see boats drifted by the billows, men swimming for their lives, floating corpses, timbers and splintered oars; for the flames of the burning galley lighted up the surrounding scene with a brilliant flood of crimson light.

The Neapolitan viceroy, Don Ugo di Moncada, after doing all that could be done to defend his ship, and knowing that his cause was irretrievably lost, scorned to surrender himself, and resolved to perish, but to sell his life dearly to the enemy. Surrounded by his officers and the generals of the land forces, amongst whom were Cæsar Fieramosca (brother of Hector), Don Pietro Urias, Antonio Colonna, the Marquis del Guasto, and many others, he posted himself abaft the mainmast, near the helm, and wearing a rich suit of Damascus armour, with a shield on his arm, and the order of the Golden Fleece on his breast, he awaited the final attack of Filippino's men, who came rushing along the causeway in disorder and confusion to assail him.

Lambert advanced with a view of striking the first blow; but, without his being able to tell how, the soldier with the morion passed before him, whom he had observed constantly at his side during the engagement (and indeed had often received assistance from him), but who, just at this instant, struck by several blows at once, fell, and tumbled headlong from the ship's sides into the sea. Lambert fancied, as he fell, that he pronounced his name; but surrounded as he was, and his head stunned by the cries and uproar, he could not be certain whether he had really heard himself called by name, or whether it had been mere fancy. And soon (not to prolong our story) after a brief but bloody struggle, that small knot of Spaniards was put to the sword. The viceroy was slain, and so was Fieramosca, and almost all those who had attempted, in that desperate manner, to prolong the defence; and thus the Spanish flag-ship fell into the hands of the Genoese, who, lowering the standard of Castile, hoisted in its place the Genoese cross, amidst a thousand joyful acclamations of victory.

Towards the gaining it, not a little assistance had been rendered by those galleys, which, directed by the admiral, before the battle commenced, to stand further out to sea, had closed in on the rear of the Spaniards, raking them with their guns. One shot, among others, had, towards the end of the action, struck and sunk the Spanish admiral's ship a foot below the water, so that the Genoese had scarcely become masters of it, and Lambert had scarcely had time to receive the sword of a Spanish cavalier, the Count d'Aguilar, who had surrendered to him, when they perceived that the galley was sinking. Filippino commanded his men to quit the vessel, and it may be readily believed that he was obeyed without delay. Some threw themselves into the boats, some succeeded in climbing the prow of the admiral's ship; and in a few minutes the vessel was cleared of the men, who were at liberty; but the galley slaves remained in it, nor was there any human power which could avail to save them. The water was already as high as their waist, and from the interior of the galley from the low and hollow parts of the hold, the air expelled by the water that rushed in, came forth with a deep gurgling sound, the dirge (a poet would say) of the ship, that felt itself sinking o rise no more. But very different lamentations, (in which truly there was no poetic fiction) very different cries did the wretched band of galley slaves sent forth, some striving with furious but impotent struggles to burst their chains, some writhing and twisting their bodies in all directions, many weeping and imploring pity, and the greater part yelling out blasphemies and curses; whilst the water kept rising the time.

Presently a huge wave came sweeping on, and where before were seen poop and prow, and the bowsprit of the Spanish vessel, the heads and outstretched arms of the frantic crew of galley-slaves, noting was visible but the white and foaming waves. The masts still remained; but they too in a moment sunk beneath the surface of the water. At the same instant, a tremendous and instantaneous explosion, accompanied with a glare of brilliant light, shook and convulsed the sea, the mountains, the fleet; and then left the whole scene in profound darkness. A moment after there came showering down beams and timbers, iron bars that had been wrenched away, human limbs, and fragments of a thousand things, which fell into the water, or on the galleys, killing and maiming God knows how many, and doing an infinity of mischief: after which, followed a deep and awful silence, in which no sound was heard but that of the wind moaning and sighing amongst the ropes and sailyards, and the dashing of the waves, as they beat against the vessels, or resounded afar upon the rocky shore.

Lambert after this was despatched to the army of Lautrec. When he had been defeated and his army dispersed, he went into Puglia with Renzo da Ceri; by-and-by, when siege was laid to Florence, he determined to hasten thither to aid in its defence; and not without some difficulty, succeeded one evening in effecting his entrance into the city. Having arrived with a beating heart, as may readily be imagined, near Niccolo's house, he encountered Laodamia in the way we have already related.

END OF VOL. I.

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